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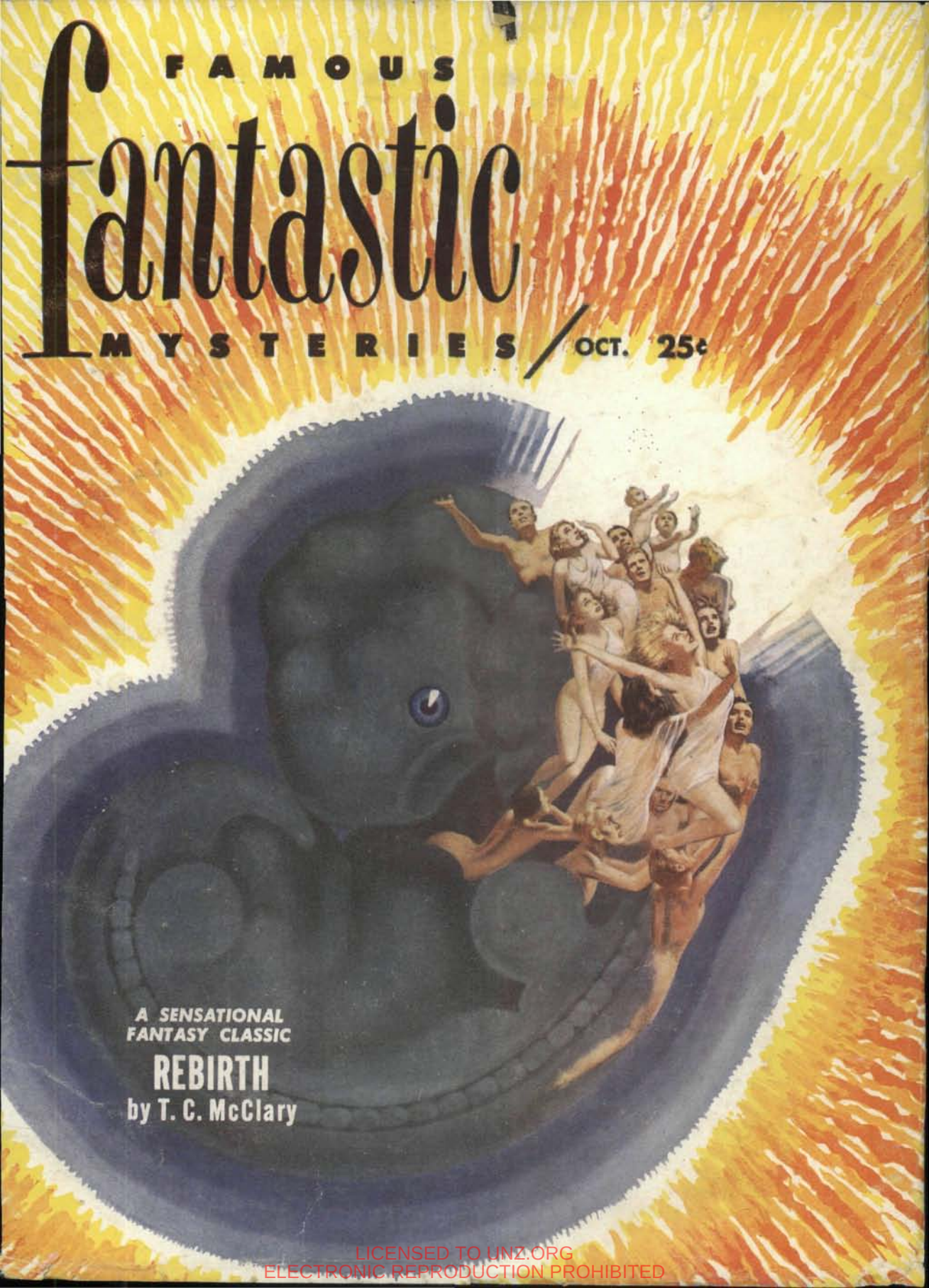

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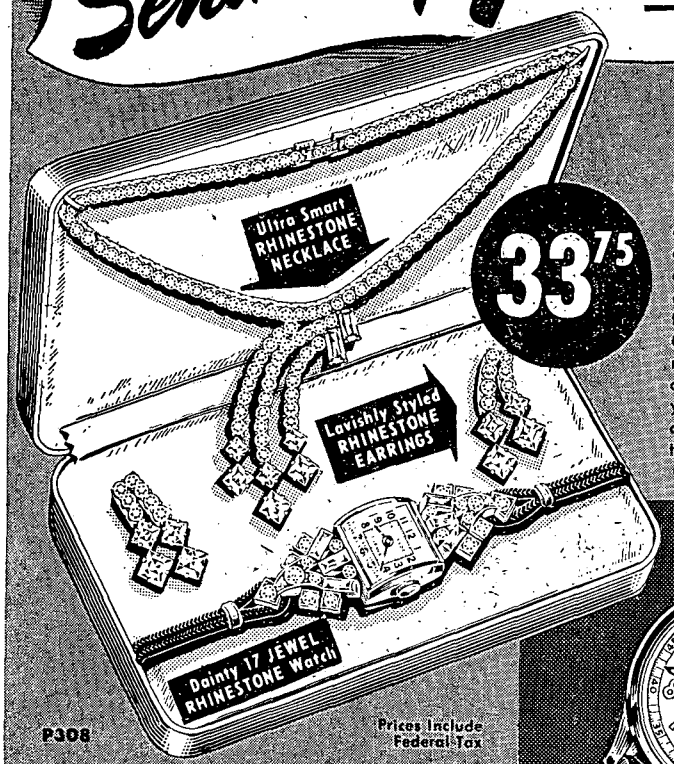

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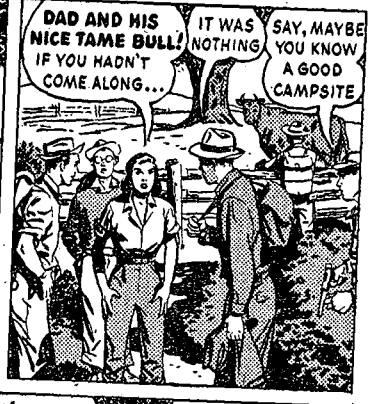

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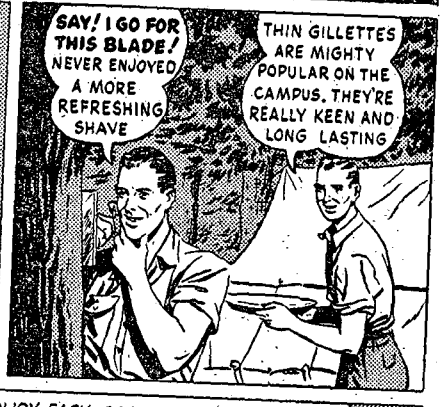
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fantastic
MYSTERIES

OCTOBER, 1951

VOL. 12 NO. 6

Feature Length Classic

REBIRTH **Thomas Calvert McClary** **14**
The strange day when all human thought and memory blanked out. . . .
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Novelette

MONSIEUR SEEKS A WIFE **Margaret Irwin** **76**
Lovely as the springtime, in the deep mysterious forest of the ancient Juras, they awaited him. . . . Three sisters—one offering life, one bitter frustration, and one strange, unearthly death. . . .

Short Stories

NOBODY'S HOUSE **A. M. Burrage** **92**
He asked a question of the dead, and out of the dread silence he got the fatal answer. . . .

THE MAN WHO COLLECTED POE **Robert Bloch** **98**
The mind of Poe will ever haunt the world of living men—but Launcelot Canning was haunted by Poe's unhappy, restless soul!

THE READERS' VIEWPOINT **6**

IN THE NEXT ISSUE **75**

GOLDEN ATLANTIS **Richard Butler Glaenzer** **90**
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THE NEXT ISSUE
WILL BE ON SALE SEPT. 19

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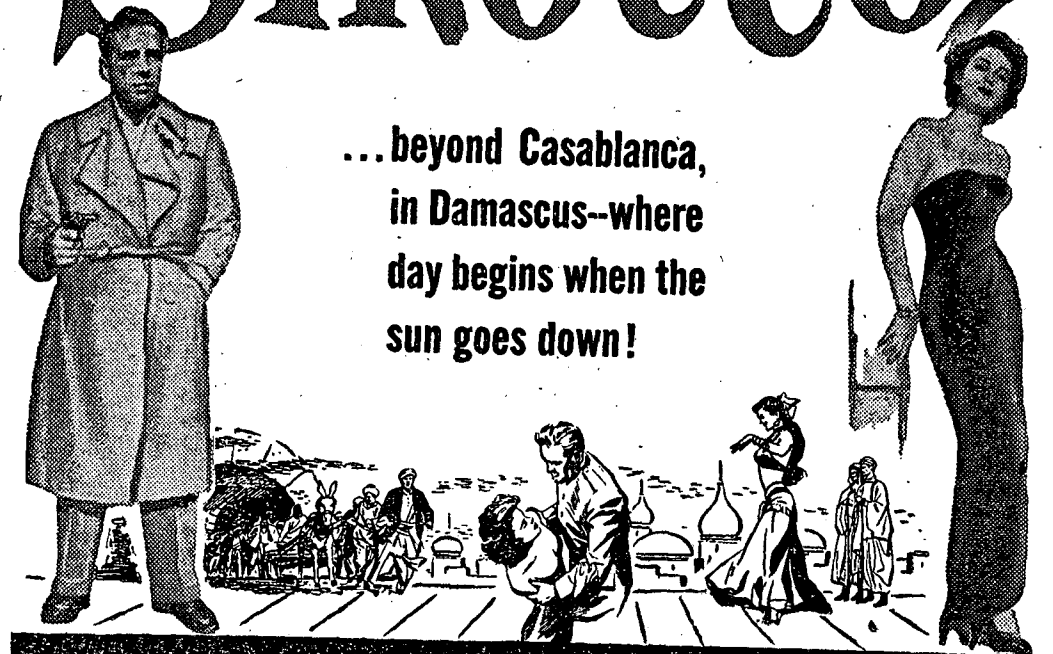

Columbia Pictures presents HUMPHREY BOGART in SIROCCO co-starring MARTA TOREN - LEE J. COBB with Everett Sloane - Gerald Mohr - Zero Mostel - Screen Play by A. I. BEZZERIDES and HANS JACOBY - Based upon the novel, "Coup de Grace", by Joseph Kessel - A SANTANA PRODUCTION - Produced by ROBERT LORD - Directed by CURTIS BERNHARDT

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THE READERS' VIEWPOINT

Address comments to the Letter Editor, Famous Fantastic Mysteries, All-Fiction Field, Inc., 205 E. 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y.

THE EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear Readers:

We are proud to present in this October issue of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* a great favorite in the fantasy field—"Rebirth" by Thomas Calvert McClary. Mr. McClary is a rightfully famous author of fantasy, and also an experienced storyteller in other fiction fields. Many of you have doubtless seen his name many times in the various magazines published by Popular Publications and other leading fiction houses. But to prove how clever and extraordinarily imaginative he is, we need only to escort you into the following pages. Just try to put yourself in this author's place and see if you think you could make such a plausible and entertaining reconstruction of the astounding situation which beset the world in "Rebirth".

Famous Fantastic Mysteries is a round dozen years old with this issue—a cause for rejoicing among us fantasy-fanciers. It began, you will remember—and how well I remember!—with the September-October issue, 1939. And here it is, after a few months of experimentation, back in its original size, with its artists on the job as usual, a new, modern masthead to keep it as fine and up-to-the-minute as any magazine in the world! And here are The Readers' Viewpoint letters, as lively and thought provoking as ever through the years—

Sincerely,
Mary Gnaedinger.

APPRECIATION OF R. W. CHAMBERS

Chambers' "Slayer of Souls" is one of the finest contributions to the field of STFantasy fiction. Most connoisseurs of our type of fiction consider that as his greatest effort to our medium of reading, and many regret that he never had the opportunity of confining himself more to this field. He lacked none of the characteristics that made Poe and Lovecraft famous. For he has the temperament, the mood, and that unknown, unseen horror that the reader feels in the works of those great fantasy writers. One can strongly sense this *mood* in the novelette, "The King in Yellow," but no strong prisms are needed to find it overflowing in that gem, "The Yellow Sign," a masterpiece that to this day remains a monument as a weird fantasy in the best of traditions.

I would like to register a plea for F.F.M. to go monthly. I would appreciate knowing how many others would welcome this. The so-called competition from other allegedly similar 'zines may appear relatively stiff on the surface, but qualitatively they are very weak.

Before ending I would like to announce that owing to a number of demands received by me lately, the American Science-Fantasy Society wishes to have all persons and fellow aficianados of STFantasy note that we are now establishing our headquarters and main Chapter, open to all for membership who live in the Metropolitan area of New York. All fans and professionals in the field are cordially requested to inquire for membership for both our main Chapter as well as our international club. Further information can be secured by writing directly to me.

Calvin Thos. Beck, Founder,
American Science-Fantasy Society.
7312 Blvd. East,
North Bergen, N. J.,
Suite 2-C.

FROM A LOYAL GAL

The May issue is super. "Slayer of Souls" is a beautiful piece of writing. Plotting, characterization, atmosphere, are all there with an added quality of a beautiful choice of words. Riddle me this, dear editor, why aren't we getting any new stories with this lovely lilting phrasing? Chambers had it, Merritt had it and there *must* be writers today with it. Why don't we see it in print or am I outdated in wanting it?

With all the good men in the field editing science fiction and fantasy, Gold, Browne, Palmer et al, it does my feminine heart good that you are right up there on the top of the heap, Mary Gnaedinger, doing a bang-up job. From me that's a real compliment. Generally speaking I like men (darn 'em) a lot better than women.

Alice Bullock.
812 Gildersleeve,
Santa Fe, N. M.

Editor's Note: Thank you, Alice Bullock!

FROM A SOLDIER IN KOREA

My sister recently air mailed me a copy of the May issue of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries.* I've been reading science fiction ever since I was old enough

(Continued on page 8)

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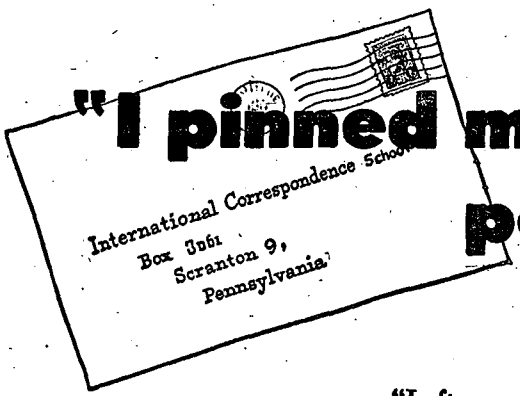
"I pinned my hopes to a penny postal"



JESSE K. KIMBALL
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(Continued from page 6)

to read and I have always enjoyed it immensely.

"The Slayer of Souls" was interesting to me because the setting is the Far East where I happen to be at the present time. So far I haven't been bothered by any spirits. But, it wouldn't surprise me any.

I would like to hear from anyone interested in science fiction. Things are boring over here in Korea just now and the only thing we can look forward to is mail call. I'd also appreciate it if anyone has any old copies of science fiction magazines that they'd like to donate to a couple of G.I.s.

I think you have a swell magazine there, and I can hardly wait to get back to the States so I can read it regularly.

CPL. MICHAEL J. PELSANG.
T & T Co., 4th Sig. Bn., APO 301,
c/o PM, San Francisco, Calif.

ILLUSTRATIONS WONDERFUL

Well, I see you've put pictures back into F.F.M. Good. The cover was very well done, but it looked too much like a scene from a cheap mystery. Both inside illustrations were wonderful, even though the one for "Lukundoo" was a little too dark.

"The Slayer of Souls" by Robert W. Chambers was one of the best stories I've ever read, and as your cover states "a deathless classic of fantasy." The short, "Lukundoo" was also good.

Go on with the good work.

ROBERT DENNIS MCNAMARA.
50 Plaza St.,
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We also have a few copies of the *Fanews Portfolio*, which contains over a dozen lithos of fan pictures and artwork by Ron Clyne, Alva Rogers, John Cockroft, Chas. McNutt and others.

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G.I. WANTS MAIL

I passed a newsstand today and right off the bat my eye caught sight of a new, small-sized fantasy magazine. (It's trained for that sort of thing, you know. No kiddin'!) I hadn't seen any other quite like it before so I bought it. What do you suppose it turned out to be? You guessed it! F.F.M.! The look on my face would have done credit to the hen that just laid a square egg.

I'm a sergeant in the United States Air Force. Been in now for three years, and I don't know one day from the next where I'm going to be. I'll just have to continue to take my chances on getting a copy at the newsstand each month.

Around here, with a few thousand G.I.s, life isn't quite as private as one might like it to be. When I get a copy of F.F.M. I can just lie on my sack and become perfectly oblivious to everything except the particular tale I'm reading.

There are two things that help to make every serviceman happy. One is a good magazine to read and the other is mail. Of the former I have no complaint, but of the latter I'm sorely lacking. Anyone in the F.F.M. family feel like writing to a lonely G.I.? (I have yet to meet a young woman that appreciates *good* science fiction and fantasy. They don't seem to exist around this neck of the woods. Where are they found?) I'd sure like some mail.

SGT. ALLAN W. ECKERT.
AF 16288347,
Hq. & Hq. Sq. 2750th AB Gp.,
Wright-Patterson AF Base,
Dayton, Ohio.

Editor's Note: There are lots of women who are science fiction and fantasy fans. Perhaps some of them will write to you.

THANKING F.F.M.'S STAFF

"The Slayer of Souls" in F.F.M. is very, very good. Virgil Finlay's drawing on page 3—beautiful.

I hope you will soon make a Finlay Portfolio and be sure to include that one in it. The beauty of the flowers, the flowerlike face and figure, in fact the whole drawing, superb. It's Finlay at his best, believe me. The story was equally good. Thank you for the illustrations again. The magazine just isn't the same without them. We can imagine, or picture the characters, in the stories and the scenes, but never the same as the writer or the artist visualizes them, as no two people think or act alike. Please never take the illustrations out of the magazine again. The stories just aren't the same without them, honest.

You, Miss Gnaedinger, as the selector of the stories for each issue, the artists who illustrate covers, and inside, and the authors—which should be first, I suppose, for without them there would be no illustrations or selections—*thank you all:* for the marvelous magazine you give your readers. I watch and wait for each issue impatiently and am so glad when it comes.

Good luck to you and your staff, as always, from a very appreciative fan.

MRS. FLORENCE ANTONINI.
El Pintado Rd.,
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Danville, Calif.

(Continued on page 10)

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(Continued from page 8)

PREFERS OLD FORMAT

I have purposely refrained from writing you until the new F.F.M. was a trifle better organized. For I knew that any criticisms I might make would probably be corrected in the very next issue, and this would possibly make me appear more ridiculous than I ordinarily do.

Personally I don't like the new mag as well as I did the old. Somehow the old F.F.M. had a breath of the good old days about it. But of course the advantage is all with the new. You will, I think gain new readers, and lose none of your old ones. F.F.M. has moved out of the comic book rack, and over with the slicks. That's what we're trying to do, isn't it? Dignify the outside of our mag to match the always excellent inside. Why don't I enjoy it as much as formerly? Just nostalgia, I guess.

Taking the May issue as the subject of our scrutiny: Who was guilty of that cover? That didn't look to me like a fitting cover for F.F.M. A detective mag maybe, but not F.F.M. The contents page should contain the artists' names, designating who illustrated what. Don't you think? As for the inside illos—they were excellent, but give us more. Think of that back cover, nice, glossy, wasted. Why not put a Finlay painting on it? Or your pic, dear Ed.? Maybe even a candid snap of a flying saucer, if you have one lying around?

The stories were classics before I was born. (Well, almost.) So anything I could say of them would be superfluous. Except that I enjoyed them immensely. And that's good enough for me.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the nice people that have written me. I enjoyed your letters no end. So keep writing! I promise to answer every last one! Thanks for a grand time. See you next issue.

IVAN H. COPAS.

R.F.D. #3,
Peebles, Ohio.

DIDN'T LIKE SMALL F.F.M.

Awoooh! That's a howl, and a big one! I like the better paper in the new F.F.M. well enough, but I *don't* like the smaller size, with less words on a page, and a lot less pages. No pics either, to speak of, and while I'm not so keen about them as a lot of your readers, one or two do help pep up a story. If trimmed edges and better paper mean cutting down on the stories and page-size, I'm agin 'em; the mag does look a little more refined, but I take plenty of refined-looking magazines already—what I want is good fantasy!

MRS. C. W. VALLETTE.

Declo,
Idaho.

Editor's Note: You have your wish about F.F.M.'s size and illustrations, with this issue.

TO YOUNG FANS

Do any of you fans between ten and sixteen years old live near Long Beach, California? I am eleven years old and have been unable to meet any young readers out here.

While in a hospital last year for six weeks (had rheumatic fever) I began reading science fiction magazines. I still have to take it easy so have lots of reading time. My collection includes some choice F.F.M.s. I also draw and paint. If you would like exchanges and chats, drop me a card.

JACK DOWNING.

325 Tenth St.,
Seal Beach, Calif.

INTERESTING REQUESTS

It has been a long time since I have written you, but I have a want. I want all copies of F.F.M. that have had Otis A. Kline stories reprinted.

I missed quite a few F.F.M.s while overseas and am just now getting back to getting the ones I missed together.

Thanks for "The Slayer of Souls"—it has been a long time since I read it and think it one of the best of the older stories.

Would also like to see you reprint more of Sax Rohmer—such as "She Who Sleeps" and "Bat Wing" if you have enough requests for them.

Would also like to see you reprint all of Kline's stories—especially "Bride of Osiris."

J. FRANK AUTRY.

302 McBurnett Building,
San Angelo, Texas.

NEEDS BOOKS, MAGS

I am in need of science-fiction books and old magazines. Will any fan who may have these items for sale or trade, please write and tell me what they have? I promise to answer every letter.

MILTON KRAMER.

165 Ten Eyck Walk,
Brooklyn 6, N. Y.

YOUR HELP NEEDED

I should like to call to your attention, and I shall appreciate your letting the readers of your appropriate periodicals know, that I am at work on a Dictionary of Science Fiction terms. I shall be happy to hear from any of your readers that may wish to send me suggestions for inclusion in such a listing. I am including new words, existing words in new combinations, and existing words that are given new applications or meanings.

Readers should send, for each word, the meaning, the author, the title of the story, and the date of its publication.

I have a staff engaged in collecting science fiction terms, but always in such projects considerable help comes from the suggestions of readers.

JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY.

29 West 46 St.,
New York 19, N. Y.

(For your information: I am author of "The Dictionary of Word Origins." *Collier's* magazine for September 9, 1950, had an article about me as "the word detective." Further details are in "Who's Who in America.") Thank you!

(Continued on page 12)

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KNOWLEDGE THAT HAS ENDURED WITH THE PYRAMIDS

A SECRET METHOD FOR THE MASTERY OF LIFE

WHENCE came the knowledge that built the Pyramids and the mighty Temples of the Pharaohs? Civilization began in the Nile Valley centuries ago. Where did its first builders acquire their astounding wisdom that started man on his upward climb? Beginning with naught they overcame nature's forces and gave the world its first sciences and arts. Did their knowledge come from a race now submerged beneath the sea, or were they touched with Infinite inspiration? From what concealed source came the wisdom that produced such characters as Amenhotep IV, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, and a host of others?

Today it is known that they discovered and learned to interpret certain *Secret Methods* for the development of their inner power of mind. They learned to command the inner forces within their own beings, and to master life. This secret art of living has been preserved and handed down throughout the ages. Today it is extended to those who dare to use its profound principles to meet and solve the problems of life in these complex times.

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Founder of Egypt's Mystery Schools

This Sealed Book—FREE

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(Continued from page 10)

OF INTEREST TO FANS

We need publicity—"we" being *Quandry*. Lee Hoffman and myself (me being included just for egoboo). You see, *Quandry* has an annish coming up in a few short months, and it is planned as a whopper—90 pages, we hope! But for this we need greenbacks—though even coppers and silver helps! So if you can let fen know that *Quandry* is wanting buyers for booster ads for the annish, it goes without saying that it will be appreciated muchly. All money, queries and such should go to Lee Hoffman, 101 Wagner St., Savannah, Ga.

Thankee,
SHELBY VICK.

Box 493,
Lynn Haven,
Florida.

OLD F.F.M. BEST

I was pleased to see my letter in the May issue but even more pleased to see the letter by Roger Dard. He put it much better than I did and I can only suggest to those who still think that the new F.F.M. is better than the old, to clip Mr. Dard's letter and refer to it often. It's the "last word" on the subject.

Sincerely,
J. WASSO, JR.

119 Jackson Ave.,
Pen Argyl, Pa.

NEWS FOR FANS

I would like to bring to the attention of your readers one of the better science fiction fan clubs now in existence. The International Science Fiction Correspondence Club has been operating for about two years. At the publishing of the last roster, there were about a hundred and ten members, with close to thirty from other countries, including England, France, Canada, and Australia. There is a bi-monthly club organ, called the *Explorer*, which each issue publishes material donated by members, along with departments which include a Trading Corner for those with want lists or mags or books to dispose of, and a Kollector's Korner, listing each member's hobbies, so that he can get in touch with others who are interested in the same subjects.

The best part of it all is that there are no dues! The only expense is a year's subscription to the *Explorer*. This is only fifty cents for a year, and the privileges you get with your sub are well worth the relatively small price. A sample copy can be obtained for a dime. Write Ed Noble, Box 49, Girard, Penna., for further information, or else write me. If you write Ed, please say that you heard of the club from this letter.

Sincerely yours,
ROBERT P. HOSKINS.

Lyons Falls, N. Y.

FANZINE IS EXPANDING

Hope I'm not too late to get my letter in for F.F.M. . . . but I didn't have a chance to read the latest issue till only last week, since I'd read the Chambers yarn before and kept delaying the re-reading.

It still made good entertainment, and it's the best of the three long stories you've issued in the new format. I hope, though, that if you intend to steer clear of science-fiction, you give the s-f fans a break and stay away from weird stuff also! A John Taine novel would be nice—"Green Fire," for example, since I think the others are too long. Or maybe Stapledon's "Last and First Men" if it will fit.

Parke's cover on the May issue was nicely colored, but again failed to show anything. Finlay would show to advantage on the glossy cover stock, I think.

Spaceship, my fanzine, is now 24 pages per issue, and it might grow even larger. The price is a slim dime for a copy, and the mag is now in its third year of publication.

If anyone's got copies of the first three 1940 issues of F.N., or the November 1939, Jan., Apr., Aug., Oct. 1940 issues of F.F.M., please let me know. I'd be willing to buy them or else trade for them.

And thanks, Miss (Mrs.?) Gnaedinger, for the generous letter-columns of your magazines. I've gained two of my most valued correspondents—and sources of mags—from my letters in your fantasy magazines at Popular Publications.

BOB SILVERBERG.

760 Montgomery St.,
Brooklyn 13,
N. Y.

Editor's Note: Your editor is Mrs. Gnaedinger, but the customary Miss for a professional woman will not be amiss in addressing me.

NEW FANTASY MAG LIST

You made a lot of changes in your magazines in the last few issues. All for the better, if there is no further change. When the Readers' Viewpoint was left out, even the new beauty of F.F.M. was not enough to compensate. Nearly perfect, now.

The Readers' Viewpoint in its present form is a great service to collectors (and dispersers) of fantasy. Perhaps could be of great value to me, if this letter squeezes in. A friend and I are trying to make up a checklist of dates of all fantasy magazines, and would like to include many of the so-called borderline publications.

These last named present the greatest difficulty. Some magazines, such as *Black Cat, Horror, Terror, Ghost Stories, Dr. Death,* and *Golden Fleece* are so extremely scarce that even information on them is hard to find. Others like *Doc Savage, Copy, Captain Zero,* and the fantasy issues of *Myself, Mind Magic, Flash Gordon Mag,* and the old *Mystery Stories,* although not as scarce, are still mysteries to us.

We intend our checklist to be a handbook for collectors, and cannot include more information than date, volume, and number of a given issue without bloating the booklet into a massive tome. Any interested fans who can volunteer data on these magazines will be thankfully welcomed. All we wish are dates and volume and number of each.

(Continued on page 106)

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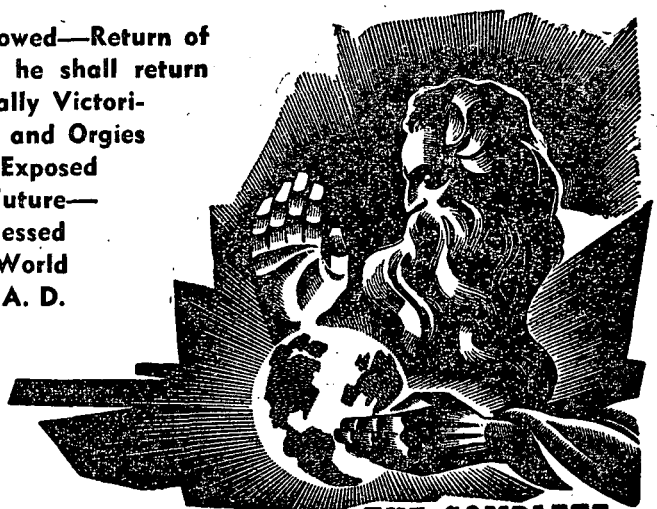
Coming Conflict Foreshadowed—Return of Hitler, Actual time when he shall return alive. United Nations finally Victorious—Diabolic Sex Secrets and Orgies of the Witches Assembly Exposed —Free Energy for the Future— Cosmic Power to be Harnessed by Man—Future course of World Events from 1951 to 3797 A. D.



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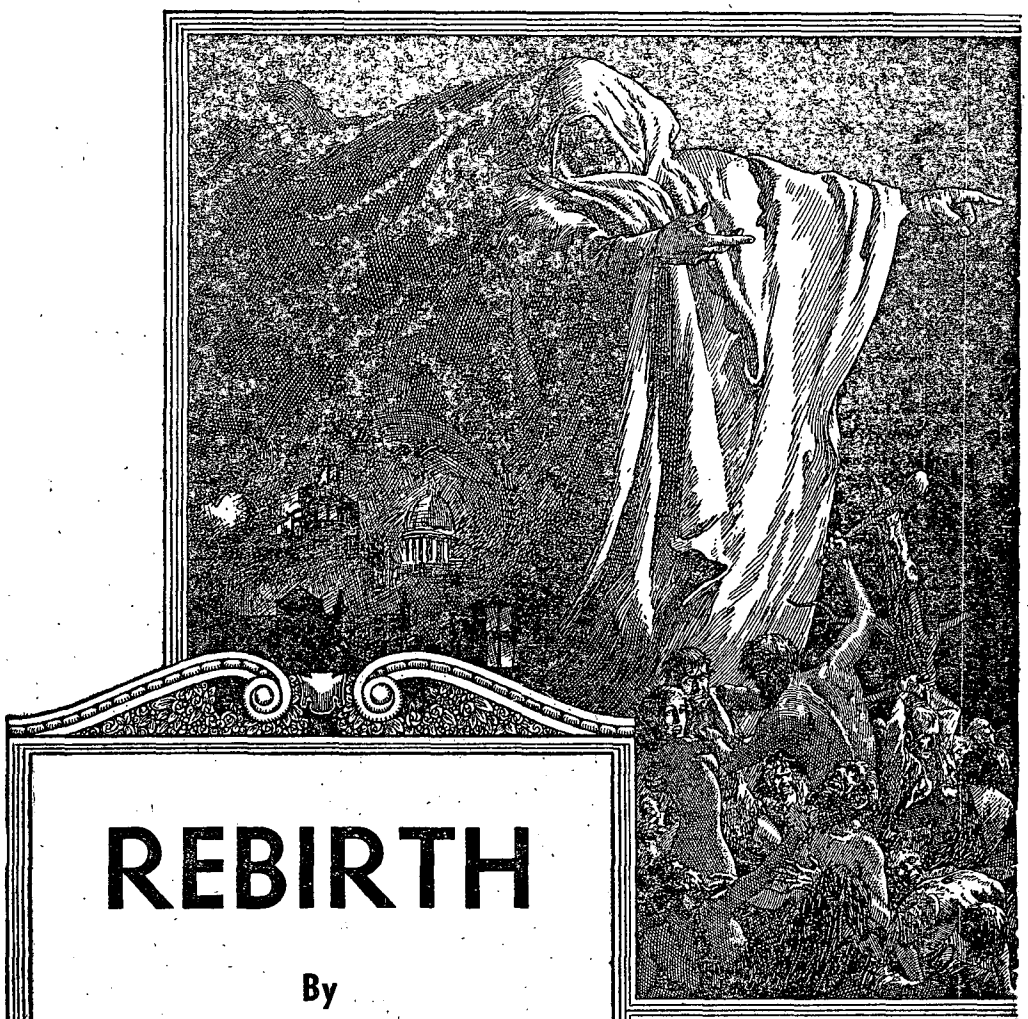

REBIRTH

By

Thomas Calvert McClary

Their long forgotten past had become their new future. . . .

PART ONE

TONI WENDLESS gave the party in honor of Marion Scone, who had just astonished the ultracritical by scoring as possibly the finest pianist in the world at only twenty-four. Toni was one of those keen, crystalline, very smart writing women who dabble in everything from politics to scenarios. She collected experiences and people of importance. Colorless of her own nature, she took from each person a little of their color. The world of 1958 knew her as a person who would always be in the center of excitement and major intrigue.

It was precisely the kind of a party expected of Toni; the kind she would write up so wittily in a novel. Marion Scone, warm of nature, quick of laughter and ravishingly beautiful, set the glamor and the tempo. It was the fifteenth of March and oddly a soft balmy night, and this seventieth floor penthouse looked out upon the twinkling flow of New York's night life. There was the metallic wit and humor

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Swiftly, without warning, it struck—that mindless prank of science gone mad, when thought was turned off in an instant. When men forgot, and lived as beasts . . . yet remembered to die like men, for the dawn of a better tomorrow. . . .

of people sure of their particular pinnacle in life, perhaps vain of their importance but certain of their power.

It was power that was chiefly interesting Toni this year. The reason for her sudden interest in Marion Scone became apparent when Silas Brent came in. He was a man with the dynamic features of a thunderhead and just about as ruthless. He was a banker, a king maker, an operator of great international chess moves, but this much in his favor would not be challenged: he was a producer of wealth. He was a monopolist, an accumulator of great enterprises, but he made his properties operate in general to the people's good, as such things were considered in that year. About the only way Toni could be sure of his presence was through Marion, in whom he found an unspoiled freshness to relieve the unmitigated cynicism of his life.

Mayor Daniels probably would have come of his own wish, to be among that hand-picked crowd, but he was an equal admirer of Marion, although from the pole opposite to

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Brent's. Brent used millions of dollars for his power; Daniels used millions of votes. Next to the president, he was possibly the most important political figure in the country. An ex-bricklayer and contractor, he looked the part. Thick of body, thick of skin, not too brilliant, but shrewd as a ferret about the ticking of the common man.

The third guest of outstanding importance was Raine Goddard, a young man of thirty and indisputably the most brilliant scientist of modern times. His field was higher electronics and chemicals. He had accomplished incredible things with an ease and swiftness which left the world gasping. Among them was the production of a cable stronger than wire out of corn fiber, and the capture of the energy of tidal movement at such fantastically low cost that the government had bought the patents and buried them to prevent an economic upheaval.

Goddard had a fiery contempt for stupidity and human stubbornness and a scathing tongue where outworn economics were concerned. He was feared, not only by men, but by nations. Five attempts had been made upon his life. It was for this reason that he had built his real inner sanctum, the citadel of his most advanced work, in a far place so well hidden that only six men in the world knew its precise location.

Science was Goddard's god, his life, his reason for existence. But his heart burned with a love for Marion Scone so intense that his feelings swelled through the whole room like organ music.

There was something awesome in the depth and strength of his feelings. Watching Goddard look across at Marion at the piano, Brent felt the acute uneasiness this young man was causing him more and more of late. Any man with Goddard's genius and sweeping emotions was a potential menace.

Brent could recall, for instance, that Goddard had laughingly said not long ago that an army of a mere one thousand men could sweep the world of military resistance. A science army, he had called it. It was one of those statements made in the height of argument, but Brent had caught a mocking gleam in Goddard's blue eyes. It had given him the very serious worry that Goddard was speaking fact and not theory.

THE POSSIBILITY was appalling to Brent who did not like wars and did not consciously make them, but considered them unavoidable and the only solution to certain periods of upheaval and depression inherent in the cycles of human life. The recent war had been to assure the world of peace and safety for all time, of course, but already unpredictable factors were making themselves apparent. Brent was a realist who tried to make the most of life as he found it. He dealt in effects and not causes. In Goddard he recognized a threat of power superior to his own. He had been bothered with the fantastic notion of late that Goddard could even make himself dictator of the world if it popped into his head.

This thought was on Brent's mind as the last chord drifted out from beneath Marion's fingers and melted into the night. There was an instant of dead quiet, a real and earnest homage to her talent, and then a burst of riotous applause. She played encores and finally finished. The party settled down into that fast shifting kaleidoscope of groups and conversations that mark such affairs. In the course of time, Brent found himself the inevitable center of a stormy argument with Goddard. Toni watched this with a feline satisfaction.

The group had been discussing world conditions and they were not pleasant. Goddard was in a sharp mood. He said caustically, "We have the tools and ability so that literally every man in the world could live like a king. And what have we got to show for it? A bare hundred million people on the face of the globe have the common conveniences of modern life. We are still ridden with poverty, disease, starvation, worry, ignorance, unemployment, crime and wars."

"Aren't you forgetting the intricacy of economics?" Brent demanded.

Goddard snorted. "What's so intricate?"

"Wealth must be created."

"Look," the young scientist said intently. "With two million workers, I could produce every solitary need and convenience and luxury of modern life for every man, woman and child in twenty years. We have the tools and the capacity and the power for that *right now!* Why isn't it done?"

"You can't change human nature," Brent growled.

Goddard gave him a glance of chill mockery. "We can change lightning to electric current and we can make vegetable plants produce ten times as much. But a man who wants to better human nature is called a radical!" He watched the king maker closely. "You're one of the men who run this world. Have you got a way to avoid the next war or depression?"

Brent snapped, "I am not a warmonger, Goddard! But mankind has built up habits and traditions of thought and actions over a good many thousand years. A man fights to gain his place in life and hold it. Nations are much the same. You don't banish those things in a day." He smiled bleakly. "Or would you

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legislate war and depression out of existence and expect that to work?"

"If I thought wars and depressions were simply confusions of habit, I might do better!" Goddard said fiercely. "I might eliminate habit. For instance, the habit of men accepting war as a necessary evil."

Goddard threw that at Brent in the way of a personal challenge. Brent's square face hardened. "Go on!"

"We have enormous knowledge and we don't use it," Goddard said. "We have developed science and it threatens to destroy us because of stupidity. Take a certain cosmic wave I discovered. It needs very laborious and expensive development, but it could be used to kill off all of a given animal or plant life, such as rats or certain weeds. No health or farm department has offered to develop it. But every war department in the world has done everything short of murder to get it out of me!"

"I believe shortly Mr. Goddard will suggest we are growing more savage than apes!" Brent suggested drily. "Well, for the sake of argument, say you eliminated habit. Say that some morning everybody in the world awakened and had to learn everything they knew and do by habit all over again. What have you gained?"

"I don't know exactly," Goddard murmured. "But it is an idea. The result couldn't be much worse!"

The group laughed. The argument came to an end. But Brent did not laugh. He drew long and abstractedly upon a dead cigar. He sat on with Mayor Daniels after Goddard and the others drifted away.

The mayor grunted finally, "That man's mad!"

"*Mad?*" Brent repeated. "Who isn't? The thing is, is he mad enough?"

"What could he do even if he were?" the mayor asked.

"Almost," Brent stated with conviction, "anything he set out to in the realm of science!"

Marion Scone took Goddard and their friend, Drik Stevens, off to her small studio apartment for dawn breakfast. The contrast of her lodgings with Toni's duplex penthouse was sharp. She would not actually have lived in Toni's place by choice, but going into her kitchen she found an annoying leak in the water pipe and murmured with momentary vexation, "Darn it, why does there have to be such a difference in the way we live?"

Goddard heard that and it fell upon some stream of thought flowing through his mind. He looked almost crossly at Drik and demanded, "Well, *why?*"

Drik raised amused eyebrows and answered with cynical humor, "Maybe because some people work and some don't. Marion, of course, is excepted. No artist should be expected to work."

"You have struck something there," Goddard growled. "Few artists do what the world calls work, and yet few are lazy and many produce something the world needs. Give a man like Brent a monopoly on musical talent and he would make it pay a fortune!"

"The arts are paying off better, quite well in cases," Drik pointed out.

Goddard made an irritated gesture. "With luck and publicity. Those without it still starve! In other cases brains and talent get it in the neck even harder. We can't forget laziness . . . science could end that debility in a couple of years. The point is that it is not brains or the producers who get paid. It is a lot of leeches with a peculiar ability for leaching and often not much more."

Drik breathed, "Ah, the trader class . . . the promoters! You have never liked them."

"They probably have a use," the scientist conceded sourly. "I will even grant they are necessary to progress and development, Drik. But they profit upon confusion, war, depressions, and the other man's blunders. It is in their nature to foster ignorance and disrupt planning. They will do it as long as they have the upper hand!"

Drik was one of those pegs of modern society for which there is no tight fitting groove. Well educated, with a keen mind and a capacity for ideas, he had no ability, and perhaps no inclination, to profit by his own ideas. Men like Brent considered him a useless form of life. Yet Brent had made much of his fortune out of ideas conceived by men like Drik.

Now he lighted a cigarette and watched Goddard through the veil of smoke. "What have you got in mind, my friend?"

"It would be pretty devastating," Goddard said, watching dawn through the big studio windows. "It is my idea that most of our ills, perhaps ninety per cent, are rooted in traditions, formulas, methods and shibboleths for living which belonged to people and times long since dead. In the meantime, our capacity for thought, our brain power, has increased enormously. If these short circuits were eliminated, I think modern man with his brain capacity and the tools at hand would build a clean and decent life unfettered by many economic ills."

"Most efforts to eliminate those short circuits have caused two or three new ones," Drik mentioned.

"I am thinking of eliminating every last one," Goddard said. "I am thinking of an-

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nihilating the world's habits and memory."

Drik chuckled. "Leave mankind starting from scratch with nothing but instinct and native intelligence? That would be an idea! How many centuries would it take?"

Goddard turned and looked at him and his eyes were opaque. "I could do it in a month, Drik. It is a comparatively simple matter now that I have found the cosmic shock wave."

Drik sucked in a long deep breath and turned a little grey. After a long space, he gave a metallic chuckle. "Well, what is holding you up?"

"The cost in human life." Goddard scowled. "No worse than the next war or depression!"

"But maybe those idiots will be frightened by the magnitude this time! Maybe they'll wake up and find a way around."

Drik gave a laugh tinged with bitter irony. "Not the old dogs. They drew up the secret alliance cutting half the world out of the monetary system today. It doesn't leave much alternative for those cut out . . . starve or fight."

"Then there is no alternative," Goddard murmured. "Drik, am I mad?"

"Probably." Drik grinned. "But we're with you."

"I am not with anybody," Marion called from the kitchen. "I am here with the eggs and they are getting stone cold!" She poked her pretty face around the door and scowled, but her eyes were soft upon Goddard.

GODDARD made one more impassioned plea for peace and security before the International Society of Economic and Political Science. His facts were simple. Mankind had developed the tools, skill, knowledge and power to assure the world of a high minimum basic living. Something had to be done to bring these factors into efficient synchronization. Not next year, but *now*.

That was the stickler. The meeting broke into a confusion of traditional jealousies, distrusts, fears, intrigues for control. Everybody admitted something should be done, but nobody wanted to be the one to do it. Few were willing to approach a matter with cold scientific detachment devoid of vanity and greed.

Goddard's temper burst at the end of four days of wrangling. What did it matter who ran the show, or how often the management was changed, if it ran? Science could offer the world so much that greed and power lust lost their meaning. What did a million dollars or a fifty room house mean when every man could have that with very little effort and electrical appliances could do the work of a hundred servants?

In a burst of irritation Brent roared out, "Goddard, you are talking revolution!"

"Maybe I am!" Goddard answered. "A revolt against the smothering of intelligence!"

"You have the nucleus of world thought in this auditorium!" Brent snapped. "And you see what's happening. You can't stamp out the differences of ten thousand years!"

"I can come pretty near it," Goddard stated with sudden thunderous quiet. "And I think I will!"

There was a sharp hush at the threat in his tone. Then the assemblage came to its feet yelling. Another man's threat might have been laughed at, but not Goddard's. They knew his genius and they feared it. There was an ugly quality to the crowd's murmur.

Drik Stevens found himself next to Brent and remarked with cynical humor, "An enlightened group, aren't we?"

"What do you mean?" Brent demanded.

"There is scarcely a man in here who wouldn't like to see Goddard torn limb from limb!"

"The man's crazy!" Brent rasped. "You don't know what he'll do. He might blow up half a continent!"

"He might blow up some equally ancient bugaboos," Drik considered. "Among them the idea that any group of men or habit system is irreplaceable." He looked at the king maker with mocking speculation. "Brent, I've always wondered what you would do if you found yourself actually competing for existence with a coal heaver."

"A man is born to certain levels," Brent barked. "That is what this wild jackass doesn't seem to understand!"

"Maybe he just wants man to get a chance to reach those levels," Drik offered. He laughed and made his way out of the pandemonium. He ran into Toni Wendless in the milling crowd at Stanley's Grill.

Toni looked at him with sharp eyes and asked, "Wasn't it thrilling? He showed them up for half baked fools and scared them stiff! But they will get him for it, Drik. If they have to, they will murder him in his bed!"

Drik said, "It has been tried before," and bought a paper from a newsboy. The headlines screamed, "Goddard's Madness Threatens World!"

"I wonder what a man like Goddard would do in a padded cell?" Toni asked metallically.

Drik looked at her and finished his drink and left. He had contacts and he used them. One hour later he ran into Goddard's house.

"Thank the Lord!" he gasped. "Hurry! Brent's on his way here!"

Goddard said, "Good heavens, I'm not afraid of Brent!"

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"He's got insanity commitment papers," Drik told him.

Goddard found himself being dragged out through the lobby and into Drik's high powered car with drawn curtains. Drik banged the door and the car leaped forward. As they reached the corner Goddard looked back. Two heavy police cars, an ambulance, and Brent's luxurious car stopped before his house.

Goddard chuckled. "Wanted to be in on the kill himself!" He looked at Drik. "Where now?"

"They'll be watching your airport," Drik said. "But you can take my plane. It is fueled for thirty-six hours at six hundred." He looked over with bated curiosity. "You are really set on that plan? You're going to return mankind to its aboriginal state?"

"It is dangerous, but I have faith in its success, Drik. Man has the capacity for thought. He will relearn so rapidly that he will not have time to get rutted in traditions."

"It sounds good. At least it can't be worse than what would come of that crowd's dissension!"

"Yes, it *sounds* good," Goddard murmured with a tone of doubt. "Providing I'm not actually crazy. Am I, Drik?"

"It is a kind of craziness I'd like to have!" Drik laughed. "You don't get bogged down by uncertainties and compromises, at least!" He swung into the small airfield by his country house. "What about Marion?"

Goddard's eyes burned and his face set. He said through stiff lips, "I can't put the world through something and spare myself!"

Drik pulled up beside the hangar. His men already had the plane warming up on the apron.

"Could you use my help where you're going?"

"I could." Goddard nodded. "But if you survive here, you'll be a test case in the new scheme of things. The one thing I want you to do is to get on the radio yourself some night and broadcast if you believe there is any real chance those with the power might get together on some plan that offers hope."

"I don't think I will be disturbing you." Drik grinned. He held out his hand. "Tomorrow's world will either bless you or curse you, my friend. As for me, I'm with you a hundred per cent."

Goddard's eyes held the fluid shadows of uncertainty. His friend's faith gave him fresh assurance in himself. The emotionless objectivity of pure science flowed back through him. He said, "Tell the press if nothing happens by May fifteenth, the world can forget Goddard."

"But what should we expect?"

"Rebirth!" Goddard cried. "A rebirth clean of all tradition! Man will begin to think for himself."

Their handgrips tightened. The scientist turned and stepped into the plane. He circled the field once, wigwagged, and then climbed toward the bright stars.

Crazy! Drik wondered of his friend. He could not decide. Goddard had a way of stripping life down to fundamentals. If something needed to be done, he found the means and worked it out. That was all. Maybe that was crazy. His whole philosophy sprang from the fact that man had originally been born free. Now what Goddard saw was the result of man's own genius shackling him with misery and slavery. He was crazy enough to want to end that.

Drik gave him a twenty-four hour start and then released his statement to the press. The world responded traditionally. Stock exchanges buckled. Cabinets met. Every nation mobilized its armies. These were movements of pure habit, for every nation knew that if it was conquest and dictatorship Goddard was after, he would gain his ends by electronics and chemicals against which they had no defense.

A hectic hysteria gripped the world's leaders for a week and then fear of Goddard subsided. After all, what could one man do? At most, he had five or six helpers. Even if he had developed a withering death ray, he did not have the men at hand to produce it or use it on a sufficient scale.

At one o'clock on May fourteenth, Radio New York struck the tempo of the world's half shamed mockery. ". . . one more day and Goddard's threat will have proved to be . . . just *Goddard's madness!*" the voice intoned.

The world had forgotten its scare. Perhaps Drik, and the girl Marion, and Brent alone were able to conceive the magnitude of Goddard's dream. Marion, bringing dreams out of a piano, knew what would happen and felt no slightest doubt of the man she loved.

Drik, sipping a long drink at Stanley's, wondered cynically what form of life it would be in which he would find an actual use and need for himself. He had an unvarnished opinion of his own talents. He could not think of one really useful thing he had ever achieved or contributed to the world.

Brent sat in his office, feeling the lash of defeat for the first time in his life. He did not fear the unknown, and he had no clear idea of what Goddard meant to do. But he knew that it would be cataclysmic, and that if it worked, it would change the established world civilization. It would strip him of power. Now, looking back across the years he had held power,

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he made the sharp admission to himself that he, and others like him, had not met the responsibilities of their place. Somehow, they had bungled.

Nobody in their right mind actually wanted war, depressions, poverty, ignorance, disease. Yet those things were still present in the world when there was the knowledge, skill and physical power at hand to provide every person a life of security, peace and plenty, and moderate ease.

"Of course, the man was completely nuts," Mayor Daniels said around his cigar. "He has probably committed suicide by now."

Brent growled belligerently, "Crazy or not, he was right! And I don't think he committed suicide. I think he will strike by tomorrow night!"

The mayor gaped. He opened his mouth to speak and then closed it without sound. After a brief space, he nervously took his hat and left. He needed somebody to agree with him in a hurry or he was going crazy himself!

NIGHT passed and morning came. The city hit its normal work day stride. A few people fired, fewer hired. A steel worker slipped and fell to death. A block away, unknowing, people laughed at a new joke. A cop bawled out a taxpayer. A helicopter dropped in for a landing atop a department store and a line of streamlined, two-wheeled autos moved at seventy along the upper ramp.

Rearing man's vanity into the very portals of the gods, skyscrapers dazzled the sun with the glory of their gold and silver and chromium towers. Life within their majestic, luxuriously equipped heights, on dark, dank streets, and lowly second and third-level ramps; far underground, beneath the level habitated by the lowly worm; in subways, trams, elevateds, buses, sky-cars, rotorplanes, and on the moving sidewalks and countless craft upon the teeming rivers; in giant tunnels and on weblike spans spreading across rivers, bay and city; in penthouse apartments and stinking tenements and life-sucking and super-efficient offices; everywhere the city beat with its kaleidoscopic shifting sameness, pulsing forth its metropolitan life and character.

Suddenly, the city lifted its head and listened. The shadow of a mighty destruction passed across the sun. There were no clouds; the noise was simply the usual din. Yet a sigh, a warning, some ominous stirring of cosmic space?

It was nothing tangible. Yet somewhere, something hurtling, whining, whistling. . . .

The earth shuddered in fear. Giant buildings cringed back into their shadows. Overhead, the sky, swept crystal blue, was cold and careless of the fate of man. Men broke off conversations and looked up with premonition. Then it struck.

Man's memory, habits, knowledge, traditions, were stripped from him in minutes. He could not think. He had not rediscovered how to do that. He could not know what to do for he knew nothing. His mind, blank as a new born babe's, had no learning left within it—only the capacity to learn. In that moment, he was left solely to his native instincts.

With a growing roar pierced by the screams of frenzied millions, water, steam, power, electricity, fire, chemicals, explosives, steel and stone turned upon their masters. An engineer sat at the throttle of a subway train and looked without understanding at the train he was crashing into. An elevator operator smashed his car into the basement. A man walking along a skyscraper corridor walked right through an open window.

Boats, autos, airplanes, trains crashed, while men and women looked dumbly at controls or leaped in fright. Buildings tumbled, tunnels gave, bridges fell from concussion of wrecking traffic. Explosions came, oil ran afire, steam geysered, electricity seared and killed, watermains burst, gas crept . . . all to man's destruction.

Twisting and climbing and swelling from street to street and building to building, out and over the city and up into space, an invisible tidal wave of destruction reared and beat upon the shore of fine spun glass and steel and delicate nervous system of the city.

Confusion blanketed the world. Chaos reigned.

Yet catastrophe lingered a moment on its wing. Sections of memory and thought faded slowly. Inhibitions, lost thoughts, strange quirks of suppression, cropped out before darkness conquered mentality.

In front of Carillon's, the jewelers, Officer Ryan leaned against a lamp post easing the burden on his corns. He nodded to little Mr. John Smith, punctiliously setting the clock as he had every workday morning for fifteen years.

Every workday of his life, Mr. Smith had set the clock at just that time. That he would some day smash it to pieces was his fondest delusion.

The minion of the law was abruptly startled from a beautiful vision of a land where shoes were unknown to gape at the diminutive Mr. Smith attacking the clock barehanded. Thereafter, without further thought on the matter, Ryan stooped and carefully removed his shoes. A truck ran into an apple cart at that moment. He was frightened, and from sheer instinct, ran away.

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A young truck driver looked upon the aristocratic beauty of Elissa Montgomery in passing. She looked coolly through him. In the next instant, she smiled, with a look of surprise at herself. The following instant, instinct coming from the beginning of all time and creation, the driver was carrying her away in wild flight. Where or why he did not know.

In her brownstone house, reminiscent of the early century, Mrs. Dwight Vandervooert Cosgrave stepped from her bath. Soon she would address the Ladies' League for Decency of Dress. She thought of implications she would make about morals, and primly avoided looking too closely at herself in the mirror. She draped a towel around her.

She was abruptly shocked to feel the violent desire to parade through the corridors. Two blocks away little Gus Shueller was caught scampering between ash cans by the truant officer. The man spun him around and glared down at Gus with fierce mien. "What are you doing out of school?" he demanded.

Little Gus was frightened. In the next second he felt a profound contempt for this man. "What business is it of yours?" he yelled.

The man looked suddenly puzzled. "Why, really none at all," the man answered with a puzzled look and, releasing him, turned away.

At the City Hall the mayor jabbed a stubby forefinger into his blotter, and glanced with secret distaste at the dapper little gangster familiarly demanding a favor. Sometimes, when indigestion bothered him, the mayor wished he had never left bricklaying for politics. This man was one he should by all that was right throw into jail. But he had to grant the favor.

Suddenly he felt like killing this unpleasant being.

He did so simply by sticking a stubby finger into the other's throat and holding it there. The mayor then looked at his finger, wondered what it was. Then what the room was. Then what he was. He grew frightened and ran at that devastating question.

On the hundred and fiftieth floor of the International Trust, its president, John Morton, coldly showed Mrs. Ship and her son, Pete, to a door. The estate must be foreclosed. That her grandfather had given his father his start had nothing to do with business.

He glanced at his gold watch. It glinted in the sunlight.

Mrs. Ship suddenly wanted that watch. She grabbed it, ran.

Mr. Morton became enraged. What she had taken, he did not know. But it belonged to him. He chased her and beat her head upon the carpet.

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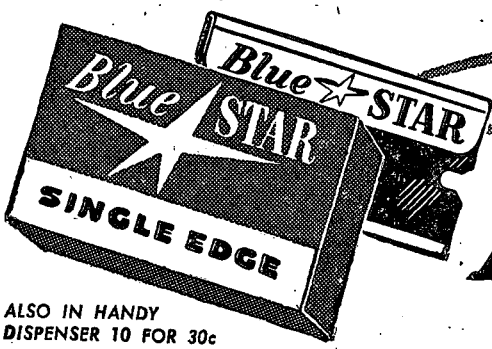

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The guard outside felt a small hand holding his. He looked down at a small boy. Within him something stirred. He saw a man beating a woman's head. He did not realize who or what they were. But he felt he must protect the woman.

Grabbing the banker by the back, he threw him through the window. The guard took Mrs. Ship by the hand. They walked away.

Thirty floors below, a clean-cut young man named Sherman faced three wolfish-looking men.

"So you're going to drain the company? Push more worthless stock onto suckers, widows, small business men, and small banks who can't fight you? And I have to try to show profits on all that water!

"All right. I can't stop you. But some day I'll get the bunch of you for this!"

They smiled. Young blood; he would learn. The smiles froze as they saw him crouch and leap for their throats like an enraged animal.

In the Stock Exchange, Vincent Singe, an unknown upstart, cornered gold. Brokers ran excitedly to the posts of their two strongest leaders.

Shortly, they forgot their worries. Like waves rushing onto a long beach, the growing noise outside penetrated.

Some shrank back and whimpered. Others bolted in fright to other parts of the building and the street. Others went insane. Many became violent and fought.

The two leaders looked curiously at each other. Their eyes lit with fierce animal hatred. Slowly, they crept toward one another. They met. A clumsy fight ensued. The smaller made a discovery. When hit or thrown onto his stomach, it hurt. Perhaps it would hurt the other one if he were hit there.

He concentrated on that. Eventually, he kicked the larger man in the stomach. He lay still. The victor sat down. The other beings crowded around, recognizing him as leader of the entire herd. They were terribly frightened.

FAR UPTOWN, amid the peace and quiet of the college campus, Professor Raymond Hitt discussed world problems with six other professors. They constituted the nucleus of the progressive group at the university.

Professor Hitt paused after a rather comprehensive statement on the ills of constitutional government. He gaped. Professor Hirsch was seriously engrossed in the process of sucking his thumb.

High above Park Avenue, in one of the city's most lavish apartments, luscious Kiki Randolph finished a hard-voiced tirade.

"Loan you back the jewels you gave me? Say, do you think I'm going to support every halfwit who loses his shirt in the market? Get out, Thomas Furrell! You make me sick!"

To emphasize the point, she threw half a grapefruit. As she expected, it landed full on the point of Mr. Furrell's nose. As she did not expect from this conservative being, it came straight back, landing juicily on her eye.

On the street, John Scappella concentrated intensely upon shining the chromium headlights of his taxi. On days off he spent hours shining and tinkering motors and metal gadgets for the sheer satisfaction of making them work.

A half hour later, he was still shining, perhaps the only being in all New York who continued his occupation after that thing of change threw its shadow across the earth.

Just off First Avenue, sometimes employed coal heaver Patrick Murphy swept a bundle of soft curves into his arms. "Don't ye be worryin' about money, me love. Glory be, if ye was in the Saharry Desert, I'd have ye a shinin' bathtub and water."

The curves nestled closer. Suddenly, Pat dropped his Kitty Murphy. For a moment he looked at her, puzzled. Then he gathered her up with brute tenderness that was sheer instinct and bolted into the street as two elevateds crashed above.

Throughout all the city, such incidents happened. Hundreds of thousands, millions, of people ran aimlessly in blind fright. Nobody escaped death of memory and habit.

But only three other people interest us. At the ferry house, eighteen show girls gathered together, counting combined funds. "Sixty-two dollars, no change, no breakfast, no clothes, no jobs," breezily commented the pert leader.

"No men, what's worse," said another. "We've been gone two years. I'll bet every man we knew has a wife and ten kids by now!"

"Cut the weeps, doll. We're darned lucky we didn't have to walk back from Ohio!" The girls laughed.

"Well, let's eat and cry afterward," the pert one suggested. Her voice had a clean, silvery rhythm. "I'm telling you kids . . . no more independence and five shows a day for this hoofer! I'm going to find a man and settle down with hot cakes regularly and babies out in one of those suburban houses we laugh about."

She nodded at this thought, led the way into the ferryhouse restaurant and ordered hot cakes. The first batter spattered into the iron. She saw the griddle man suddenly sit upon the floor and look foolishly at the griddle knife in his hand. *"Oh!"* she cried. For she could not remember what the knife was for,

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and for an instant realized this thing happening to her memory before it went dead.

Silas Brent, powerful representative of vested wealth and traditional methods, walked his two police dogs in the park. One moment he stooped over to rub one's ear. His dog suddenly cringed in fear. Brent himself felt some unknown pulsation within him.

"Goddard's madness!" he shouted with certainty.

The next moment he looked curiously upon his two animals. What were they? . . . he wondered.

A beautiful young woman sat before a piano playing with extraordinary touch. Seconds before the tempo of the city noise changed noticeably, her finely attuned ears caught cries and the crash of wrecks. She forgot a note. Then she forgot what she was playing.

"Goddard's madness," she, too, said. But softly as a prayer.

Carefully, as one lets the body of a beloved into the grave, she closed the cover over the keys.

"I'll wait, my mad darling! But don't be too long."

Fear throttled all other instincts.

Back and forth on the same streets, around in circles, into flaming buildings like frightened horses, off docks and ramps, out windows, into sewers, subways, and tunnels, hordes ran in frenzied fright until worn out. Dropping in their tracks, some slept, others died, others aroused to continue their aimless flight.

Trains in the Grand Central and Pennsylvania stations smashed barriers, pinning and crushing hundreds. Subways crashed at crowded levels, catapulting thousands to death on searing third rails. Telescoping cars carved people into pieces.

Self-preservation ruled.

The giant bridge spanning Manhattan was shaken from its moorings. With a rending crack and sigh of defeated steel, it crashed to lie mangled and tortured over wrenched skeletons of quivering ruins.

Murray Hill burst into a boiling hell. A giant gas main broke, toppling buildings like toy blocks, tearing streets, ripping water conduits and steam ducts. Great bubbles of steam, shot with flaming gas, boiled through a great wave of water as it tore down hills, a silver and fire-red wave of death.

Cornered, unable to comprehend, guided solely by long-dormant native instinct, terrified mobs streamed back and forth, trampling the weak and unfortunate underfoot in flight.

A few—a very few—craftily hid from terrified crowds, instinctively watched their chance and escaped out of the flaming monster's path.

New York, in a scant few minutes, became a veritable hell on earth, surrounded by sheets of blazing, boiling water; its area covered by dead, insane, and dying; its streets filled with fires, swept by waves, thundering with wreckage and ghastly sights; its foundations throbbing and trembling to the devastation above.

Man was left to combat the elements, to learn to think, to form new habits. He had to relearn even the simplest functions of the animals. His brain and brawn alone would carry him through—or he would die, go out like a snuffed candle.

But after three days, the gods took pity. Fires subsided. Geysers of steam and water became trickles and streams. No more tidal waves swept the island. A kind wind blew gases, fumes, choking smoke, and dangerous smells of rotting flesh and débris out to sea. Electric-power plants had ceased to operate. There was no more searing current. Catastrophe ended.

One half the human beings who had been alive within the city three days before were dead. A quarter were hopelessly insane. Hundreds of thousands were maimed and dying.

Of the remainder, none had knowledge or habit or speech.

Man's power and mastery of life were no more. Alone, he stood amid the wreckage and gruesome horror of former pride.

The city, the world, civilization, lay smashed about him. What mankind had left was only capacity for thought, and native instinct.

This was Goddard's madness. This was rebirth!

Chapter Two

NEW LIFE

CIVILIZATION lay smashed. Knowledge, its backbone, was gone.

History had not ended. But new history had begun.

One moment, man knew. The next, he knew nothing. The world, he had never seen before. He must relearn how to live. For the moment, all men were equal.

Silas Brent's first sensation was slow surprise. A strange object touched a part of him he did not know existed. It made a sound he had never heard. He noticed there were two such things and that they were attached to him. Instinctively, he knew they were not part of him.

He heard loud, dreadfully frightening noises. For a time he crouched. But, as no harm came to him, he returned to examining himself and the two things.

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They had points in common with himself, yet were different. They were alive. He felt the difference between the things and the ground. Thus came the first realization that he was a being and that there were other beings. But not like himself. And that there were things without life.

He found the things attached to him by things that moved on his wrist. The things slipped off. He decided to put them back the way he had discovered them. This took many attempts and quite a few minutes of deliberation. He had his first creative thought. Everything could not simply be another "thing." He must begin to classify things as he noticed them.

If he could have thought with knowledge, he would have known that the two things something like himself were dogs. The two things that held them were leashes. But he had no way of knowing that. The leashes were part of the dogs, so far as he could see.

His throat itched. He coughed. This surprised him. He experimented, found he could cough and grunt at will. He accepted the fact without wonder.

Men and women appeared, running and shrieking hysterically. So there were other things just like himself? They could make noises? He tried screaming. He was not very successful. He wondered if the loud noises from outside the park were made by things like himself.

He saw trees of varying height and acquired a sense of size. He wondered if the noise was made by things like himself, only very much larger.

He examined the trees closely. So did his dogs. Their actions were interesting. The dogs seemed to know all about these strange things. He must watch them carefully, learn what they knew. He saw grass and dirt and rock and examined each one closely.

The dogs barked. More things like himself appeared. Brent grunted, felt pride in the noise. They paid no attention and sped onward. They were running, and he experimented with the movement. Eventually he tripped over the leashes and banged his elbow. That was pain. The dogs came and licked him. It was pleasant. For the rest of the day he sat where he had fallen, thinking over his astounding discoveries. Memory had taken root in his mind again.

He was most puzzled that the dogs seemed to know all about things. They knew when to be afraid and when not to be alarmed. They didn't like the other things that resembled himself.

Finally, Brent put puzzlement aside. He must learn, so that he would not be puzzled.

In the afternoon, a thunderous explosion shook the ground and frightened him. The dogs clung closely against him. They shivered and growled. The fear passed, and he thought about it. The dogs were scared by the same things he was. When he was scared, it was comforting to have the dogs near by. They must always be close together when they were frightened.

He grew thirsty, but had no way of recognizing the fact. He got up and started walking. The dogs pulled toward the center of the park. Soon they came to a fountain. The dogs drank.

Brent watched the dogs lap water. He followed their example. It relieved his thirst. Then he noticed that the little pool came from the fountain. He tried licking the water that was jetting up. With some choking, he learned to swallow properly.

He wanted to explore in that far region where flames and smoke and exciting noises were. But instinct told him that there lurked danger. So he did not go.

Finding a cave, he crawled inside and lay down with the dogs beside him. He wondered what led him into that cave. Then he realized that he had two sets of feelings. One, instinct, was just there to begin with. The other was what he learned by experience—memory.

Mrs. Cosgrave found herself very frightened, and crouching. She was in a hotel lobby, but she did not know that nor how she had come there. She was still nude, except for the towel.

After a long time she was not so scared. The noise grew worse. But no harm came to her. She discovered not far from her two beings like herself. Earlier, they had been Mr. and Mrs. Pat Murphy.

The three watched each other. Then Mrs. Cosgrave crawled to where they were crouched with arms locked about each other. She touched the man. He grunted. She pushed his cheeks and felt his hair and neck. Then she felt her own. They were something alike.

He was covered with something that she felt was not part of him. At least, not like his hair. Curious, she placed her hand beneath his shirt. The feel of his well-muscled chest was nice.

The other one watched her.

Now, at one time Mrs. Cosgrave had been toasted the most beautiful belle of New York. As she stroked his chest, Pat felt something within himself. He forgot fear. He forgot the other woman. He pulled the new woman to him. She was warm and it was pleasant to hold her.

He did not recognize the mating instinct. Vaguely, his other woman did. She sat hunched

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up, watching, and with anger rising in her.

Two men ran through the lobby. One had something in his hand and he hit the other. The other fell. Blood gushed from his head. The victor dropped the thing, ran on.

The woman looked back at her man, noted the expression in his eyes. It meant nothing to her consciously. But unconsciously there was instinctive recognition. The strange woman was cuddled against her man.

Pat's woman went over to the fallen man, picked up the thing . . . . it was a wooden mallet . . . walked back and hit Mrs. Cosgrave as she had seen the man do. Mrs. Cosgrave slumped and moaned.

Instinctively, Pat turned to strike. Then he realized this was the woman he had found himself with when life began anew that morning. There was something about . . . . Some deep instinct told him *this* was his woman.

But why not both? He swung the other's limp body up, took his woman by the hand and walked. Instinctively, he looked for a hiding place. But he did not *know* what he was doing.

Eventually, he found the kitchen. Here he dropped the woman, for his nose discovered smells and instinct drew him to investigate.

At the ferryhouse, the pert little chorus girl felt one immediate instinct with her new born consciousness. She was hungry.

Upon the griddle iron, the first cakes were finishing. Reaching for one, she was burned. She was surprised, frightened, and interested. Putting her hand near the iron, she felt the heat. She touched it, was burned again. She learned not to touch hot things.

But she wanted what was on that iron. She touched a knife. It was cool and did not burn. She found how to push a cake off the iron with it. Several times she burned her mouth on the cake. After her second cake she had learned not to eat things that were hot, either.

Other beings like herself crowded about. She accepted them as a calf accepts its herd. They watched her and learned. Once she bit a girl's ear for trying to take a cake from her.

Somebody overturned the batter. It spread out, became a huge cake. The girl tasted raw batter. It was not as tasty as the cooked. From this she got a sense of distinction and comparison.

The little chorus girl wondered what batter was. She investigated some strange smelling powder near by. It did not taste like batter of the cakes. But her taste told her it was the same. Somebody grabbed the box of powder away, dumping part of it into a glass

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of water. It turned to batter and the girl tried it on the iron. It was something like a griddle cake. Her second attempt was better. She had stirred it with a finger.

She saw two things like herself smelling around eating scraps. Once they had been countermen. She knew the scraps were not as good as the cakes. So she threw them a piece of cake. They made noises and attached themselves to her like thankful puppies.

Later, she felt thirsty. She investigated liquids instinctively. Not all tasted the same. The clear, transparent fluid tasted best. Wetting fingers, she licked them. She thought of licking a glass. She stumbled across drinking from a glass by accident.

Once a wild-eyed thing ran in and hid behind a counter. It looked like the things she had fed. He growled at them, and something told her that here was danger. Already she had cut herself on a knife. She thought about that. Stealthily, she grasped a knife and crept up behind the strange unknown. She hacked at him furiously. For a moment he howled and fought back. Then he turned and ran.

One of the things like herself drank dish water. Others followed. It made them deathly ill. For hours they were too sick to notice the terrible noises and frightening flames in the outside world.

ON THE second day of new life, Pat learned to use his nose. But he learned, choking on an appetizingly smelly piece of tin, that not everything that smells good is edible. He and his women-friends stuffed gloriously on rolls, butter, pickles, many delicacies and vegetables which had been left on the stove. He found some bread in a box and kept it.

His throat ached dully. No accident made him taste liquid, and the instinct did not assert itself.

Strangers ran into the kitchen several times. Pat growled and drove them away from his property.

He found a window knocked out, and looked forth. Overhead, the sky was heavy with clouds of fearful colors. But not far away was a place that was green and interesting. He crawled through the window. The women came after.

A jut of broken glass tore Mrs. Cosgrave's side. She whimpered. Pat saw the trickle of blood and wondered. He became conscious that she was not like him and his other woman.

Pat thought of food. Going back, he fetched a box of bread. This was the first conscious act of precaution. He led the women slinking toward the green. Frightened things like himself passed, made strange noises, scampered away. Pat realized he was larger than most of them. Instinctively, he felt he would like to fight with some of those he saw. But explosions from downtown frightened him too often to stop.

Now, this part of the city was luckiest. There was the broad expanse of park. No chemical factories or warehouses were near by. The center of population and devastation was far away. Fires, floods, explosions, the havoc of wildly careening, smashing traffic had been less here than elsewhere. The air was better. They were safer.

Pat made his way into the park. The trip was fearful and exciting. He passed several corpses and instinctively knew they were dead.

Once, with a single blow, he killed a crazy thing that attacked them. He felt proud of that. He strutted in front of the women.

A strange noise frightened them. It came from two queer, terrifying things. But there was a being like himself with them. He feared the two things, but the other man did not. Pat felt a sense of respect. He crouched, looked at the man and licked his lips from thirst.

This other being was Silas Brent. After a time, Brent grew thirsty and licked his own lips. He was conscious this was what the other man had done. Perhaps he was thirsty, too. Brent decided to take him to water. Then he looked down at his dogs. They were straining and growling. They did not like strangers. But he did. He was lonely.

He thought of his cave. Supposing somebody possessed it while he was gone? Then he remembered that the dogs' leashes slipped off. He knew that the leashes held the dogs. Outside the cave he put the loops of the leashes over a knotted stump. This held the dogs and he walked toward the stranger.

Pat growled. Brent paused and looked. He examined the women, particularly Mrs. Cosgrave. These were the first women he had seen. Advancing closer, he touched the man. Pat sensed friendliness. He grunted, touched Brent in turn. Brent headed in the direction of the fountain. He looked back after a few steps. The man was watching him with a puzzled expression. Brent made noises. The man did not understand. Finally, Brent took the man and led him.

At the fountain, Brent drank. The man watched, puzzled. When he tried drinking, water got up his nose. But his throat ceased aching.

Mrs. Cosgrave watched Brent carefully. She stooped and drank from the fountain immediately, as he did. Pat's other woman did not understand so well. She choked several times before she learned to drink.

Brent thought about this. He had not yet

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formulated a perception of youth, beauty, brains. But he sensed a difference in the two women. He had a man's dim, first reactions to a woman, and looked upon the youngest. But in Mrs. Cosgrave he sensed something sharper and of a different kind. She had learned to drink most quickly.

He was groping toward a first evaluation of intelligence. He had the vague thought that there might be many things to learn. He would want those beside him who learned fastest. Why, he did not know. He had no experience or knowledge by which to think that out. It was an instinctive appreciation of intelligence.

The dogs, for instance, were highly intelligent. They knew many things he did not. He thought about that with an instinct of jealousy. He must be careful not to let the dogs see they knew more than himself.

They returned to the cave and sat down. Pat liked the man. Suddenly, he remembered the bread. He reached in the box and handed his new friend a loaf. Brent examined it without reaction. One of the dogs grabbed it, ripped it to pieces and ate. Brent grabbed up a chunk and ate also. It was good and appeased his hunger.

Mrs. Cosgrave saw that Brent had two dogs while Pat had only bread which he had found. She was curious about Brent. Instinctively, she felt him a leader. She crawled over and touched him. Pat watched. When she cuddled against Brent, he reached out and knocked her back.

Brent was interested. Why had the man hit her? He thought of what he would do. But he could not guess because he had never owned a woman.

Pat was regarding the dogs closely. Brent struggled to make signs of expression. He found it impossible. He took one of the dogs by its leash, placed this over Pat's wrist. Then he took Mrs. Cosgrave's hand and led her to his corner.

Slowly, Pat got the idea. This other being wanted the woman. He would give a dog for her. He considered the trade. Why not? He had two women. He had no dog. Dogs must be more valuable because he had seen many women but no other dogs on the streets.

Pat smiled, grunted and nodded. It was the first trade and first sign language of the new life. Brent noted the nod and grunted. He classified them as signs of acceptance.

At dusk, Brent grew thirsty again. He tried the new language. He licked his lips and looked at Pat. Pat grunted and nodded with understanding. Each took his own dog.

Returning, the dogs growled and pulled off in a different direction. The two men followed. They found the truck driver and society girl huddled together where they had dropped from exhaustion the previous day. They were sick from thirst, hunger and chill.

Brent squatted and watched them. He had learned that by watching and thinking about things he could learn much that he did not know. Instinctively, he recognized they were sick. He saw the girl lick her lips faintly. Maybe they were sick from thirst.

He touched the man. He wanted him to follow to water. But the man made no move to get up. Brent puzzled. He remembered that the bread had been carried in a container. If it held bread, perhaps it would hold water. It leaked, but not badly. He carried it to the strangers and put it under their faces.

He saw they did not understand what to do. He lapped from the box himself. In this process, he discovered how to use a container as a cup. The girl caught the idea first. Sputtering, she drank. The man watched and then did the same.

Some strength returned to the two. Brent led them to the cave. Pat ate bread. His dog snatched a loaf away. He hit the dog. Then it occurred to him that the dog must eat. It was now his dog so it must eat well. He gave the dog another loaf.

He looked at his friend and the stranger and his woman. They watched but did not dare touch his property. He handed each a loaf and watched them eat. He felt their appreciation and it brought a sense of well being within him. It was good to be able to help others.

Mrs. Cosgrave waited until all were asleep, then crept over and cuddled next to Pat. He awakened and knew who it was. Then he remembered his dog. He had given this woman for a good dog. The dog was his prized possession. The man who had given him this good bargain had given him water, too. He was a friend. Abruptly, Pat grunted and smacked the woman. She whimpered. He shoved her roughly in the direction of Brent. She crawled back to the side of her new lord and went to sleep.

Early the next morning the little tribe awakened and stretched. The cold cave had left bodies stiff. Pat was thinking of this and remembering his warm kitchen when a strange being, barefooted, appeared in the entrance.

It was ex-officer Ryan. He was carrying two other feet.

Pat leaped up to drive off the intruder. Then, remembering it was Brent's cave, he waited to see what the owner would do.

Brent saw something of an exciting color on Ryan's coat. Twinkling in the filtering

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light, it gripped his imagination. He wanted it. He drew the stranger inside.

For a long time, Brent could not draw his eyes from that shining spot that looked like a little piece of sun. It must be valuable because nobody else had one. In his mind was forming the basis of the economy of scarcity. He wondered if the man would trade it for the woman.

With much the same motions he had used to trade his dog. Brent now offered to barter with Ryan. The little tribe watched closely. Mrs. Cosgrave hoped the new man would trade. He looked nice and warm like Pat. He had a nice smell, too; a masculine smell.

Brent repeated the gestures many times. Finally, he ripped the spot off Ryan and put Mrs. Cosgrave's hand in his. The policeman understood." He smiled and nodded. The method of bartering, the smile and the nod, were now firmly established in the minds of all.

Brent spent some time admiring his new possession. Then he remembered food. He made signs of eating. The bread box was empty. Pat remembered where he had found food. After drinking, he led the little troupe back across the park. Brent was awed at sight of the strange-looking rocks with so many regular holes in them.

For several hours they roamed back and forth in front of apartment houses. Occasionally they stopped to investigate dead bodies, overturned autos, a bus.

Pat found a strange thing. It was small and shiny and cold. But it must be a face, for it had two eyes and a mouth and a nose. Its tongue stuck out of its mouth. Pat pushed the tongue in, and the face made a peculiar noise that scared him. Then he looked in the palm of his hand, and there was the tongue, very round and shiny! The face made no more noises.

He kept the cold, dead face. It was a dime collector.

They were still looking for the cave with the food that he had left when the dogs tugged violently into a strange cave. Their tails wagged and they sat in front of little caves, waiting. Brent wondered what the dogs were after. His little tribe grew nervous. To hold them he held the policeman's gold shield, for such it was, up for inspection. His calm courage and leadership were recognized. The shield became the emblem of power.

For several hours they stood before the little caves. Finally, Brent's dog pulled to a strange, closed hole and pawed it open. It climbed many rocks, pulling him behind. Then it nosed another closed hole and ran down a dark cave.

The dogs jumped at still another closed hole. This one did not open. Brent could not open it. He tried to throw his weight against the door as the dogs were doing. He knocked himself down.

Pat did not understand why Brent had jumped at the place. But he applied his brawn. There was a rending sound. The door gave at his next onslaught, sending him rolling into a nice-smelling cave. His dog's leash broke, releasing the dog, which ran familiarly through the caves. Once, long before when the elevators were not running, the dogs had made two trips up and down that stairway. The apartment they knew well. It had been Brent's.

The group followed to find a four-story, thirty-six-room apartment. It was warm and comfortable. They spent the remainder of the day in exploration.

They found fruit and many things to eat. The young truck driver ate artificial fruit and got very sick. Pat discovered coins. After much experiment, he made one go into his dime collector the right way and ring the bell. It was a big achievement. He was properly admired when he made a second one ring the bell.

Once, the dogs set up a wailing. Brent and Pat investigated and found a dead body. It was the butler who had died from fright. The body was bloating. Instinctively, Brent felt danger in it. He tried to lift it, found it too heavy. Pat lifted it; waited for directions. Brent pointed out a window and signalled at the ground.

Pat gazed down at the street. A figure ran below. He was seized with childish wonder to see if he could hit the figure with the body. Instinctively, he dropped it before the figure came directly beneath. The body landed on the figure, stopping it.

He clapped his hands with delight. Brent felt a high regard for Pat. In the same day he had made strange noise come from a strange face, had broken through an unbreakable wall, and had hit a moving object.

The whole clan now tried dropping objects onto creatures running along the street. It was long before the second strike. The young truck driver, already thought of as Woof from the grunt which was his only word, watched the experiment closely. He was the first to note that an object had to be dropped before the creature ran directly below . . . but not too long before. Two moving objects did not necessarily collide. There was a time and speed element and it had to be calculated.

He demonstrated this thought by example. Brent felt very proud. Already, he was gathering some wise and strong followers in his new life. He took leadership by instinct. It did

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not occur to him that any other might lead him. Nobody showed any disapproval. He had taken them to water and shown them how to drink. He had possessed the two smart four-legged creatures. He had evidenced calm and driven away fright when they were nervous. It was right that he should lead and they should follow.

EXCITEMENT filled the following weeks, so very important in the nation's new history. During those weeks, hordes of less fortunate were dying from starvation, thirst, the lack of the most elemental instincts. But Brent's clan survived and grew.

There was the excitement of mere living, the paradox of savagery amid the greatest luxury civilization could provide. So much there was to learn and explore. And the pride of discovery and showing others!

There was the mysterious cold cave providing numerous tasty bits. And making the clan violently ill on the tenth day when electric refrigeration had long since ceased.

There was the delicious comfort of curling up on soft carpets beneath warm beds for the night . . . of learning to take the extra feet off (taught by Ryan) and tucking the attached feet deep into downy pillows . . . of pulling huge cushions off the chairs and sitting upon them on the floor . . . of dividing the loot of Brent's clothes, found in closets . . . the mystery of getting onto the right floor, ended by Ryan with the inspiration to establish a shrub upon the landing as guide . . . throwing refuse out the window at passing creatures after Mrs. Cosgrave's instincts sensed danger in leaving scraps around . . . early morning digging for worms, a delicacy owed to the habits of some bold birds . . . the mystery in the great wind that blew the sky clear of fumes and clouds . . . and the tremendous discovery that beds *were made to sleep in!*

That discovery nearly brought havoc to the clan. For Brent found he liked his own former bed, the most comfortable in the house. And the truck driver laid claim to it by right of occupancy. Brent was unable to oust him; his authority was challenged.

Pat saved the day by walloping the usurper. Unconsciously, he established the foundation for the clan with Brent as chief and himself as captain.

The dogs discovered a miraculous spring in the White Room that sprang forth when a shiny thing was turned. The dogs were considered very superior members of the clan and regarded with respect and awe.

There was the excitement of a big cave that ran straight up, nobody knew how far. Pat had been stuck in it for hours, finally to fall

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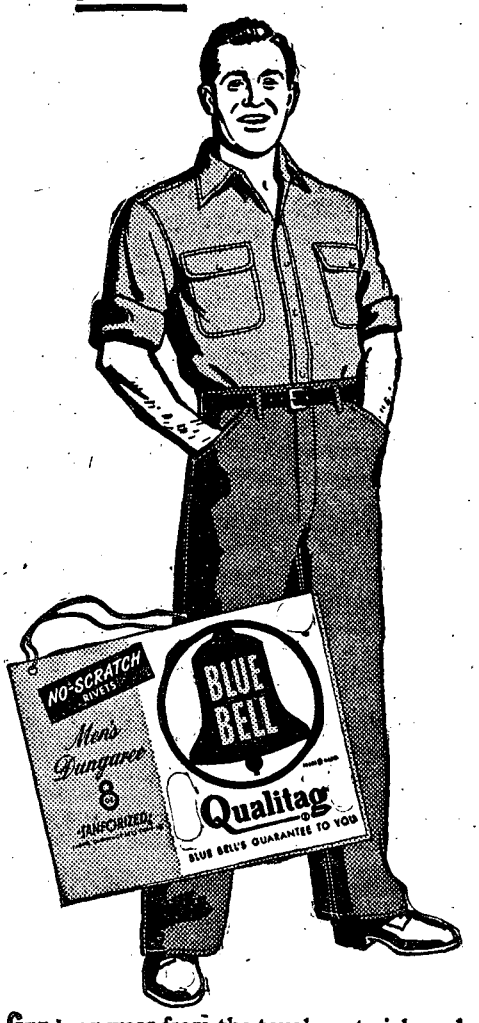

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down choking with black dirt. And the terrifying water people that looked exactly like others in the clan. It was only after elaborate experiment that Mrs. Cosgrave proved that the strange upright pieces of hard water actually reflected a being's own image. She, too, discovered the use of combs. But she ate face powder and was very sick.

At the outset of the second week, they discovered Toni. Her distant cries came at them as they moved down the cluttered avenue toward the pass into the park. There was a demanding note in the unintelligible cries and they looked up. They made her out waving a sheet over the edge of her penthouse parapet.

They squatted down upon their haunches and held the first clan council, duly allowing place and consideration for the dogs in the small circle. On this occasion, the dogs had nothing to offer. They were disinterested and shortly moved about sniffing. Brent met the eyes of the others. They had no means of expressing their vaguely formulated, groping thoughts to each other. But this was in Brent's mind: the woman was way up in this strange cave, and she was leaning over a precipice similar to their own. It was possible that they could reach that cave of hers just as they reached their own. But there was danger in any strangeness, and he wanted to know what the others thought.

He finally pointed up, and then made climbing motions, and then motions of shouldering down a door. Then he pointed at the woman. The others pondered. In various spaces of time, understanding showed upon their faces. They looked at each other and slowly nodded.

Mrs. Cosgrave alone shook her head. It took her a full hour to make her reason clear. In the case of Brent's cave, the dogs had led them. The dogs were not interested in Toni. How would they know how many mountains to climb and which of many caves she was in? They had not yet conceived of counting.

Her argument bore weight. After consideration, Brent arose and led them off toward the pass to the park. He was preoccupied with what he had learned from this incident. The first was that shouting and waving something white was a means of attracting attention. The second was a dimly forming sense of the need for accurate knowledge, such as counting. The third thing was the value of foresight and imagination. Many dangers might have confronted them in that strange cave. They might have gone in there and been attacked, or become sick, or been hurt, or lost and never found their way out. He had not appreciated Mrs. Cosgrave so greatly before.

Ryan, the barefooted ex-policeman, made a great discovery earning him the post of keeper of the cupboards. For an intriguing thing with a many-colored outside had fallen off a high place onto a radiator, and split. Delectable smells and meat oozed forth. Other such things with different colored outsides held different foods and there were many of them.

Once the young truck driver's woman stole into the forbidden storeroom. Caught by Pat, she was thoroughly chastised. He now took upon himself the duties of policeman, judge and establisher of law, not solely due to his physical prowess, but also by some instinct for what was the right way of things, and this instinct was admitted by the clan.

There were constant minor casualties at first. Shining knives and broken glass had taken toll. Pat's wife conceived the idea of throwing broken glass out the window after her tenth cut. The use of the broom was her contribution to the rebirth of civilization.

She also originated the game of throwing books out the windows. But Brent decided that nothing should be destroyed until its value was learned. Cherished because of this were four broken crocks, some bent candles, and a strange vase, later to become the Royal Goblet.

Pat found the dogs would come from a distance if grunted at loudly enough. This was lucky, for he had removed their collars and had not been able to replace them. It was no longer safe to go to the park without the dogs. Great beasts, like dogs, but larger, roamed there and growled fiercely. Sign was found that these beasts had killed many people.

Toward the end of the month, one of these beasts stalked the clan. Its roars were blood-curdling. After a bitter fight, covered with blood and long tears, the dogs conquered the strange thing. With lusty growls of victory, they ripped great chunks of its flesh and ate.

Pat tried the warm flesh and found it good. It was the first fresh meat the clan had tasted, a lynx that had broken its old cage at the Zoo.

A peculiar human was found starving in a cave in the park. He fought the clan off bitterly, finally being killed by Ryan. In the cave were great stacks of shiny things which he had gathered. His hoardings were tinfoil cigarette covers. Once he had been a banker.

There were many minor fights with small clans like themselves. At first, they killed if their adversaries did not escape in flight. It was Brent who decided they must capture. Captives were useful as slaves . . . but many proved intelligent enough to be adopted as members of the clan.

The first new member of the clan sought this relationship. It was a beautiful woman who came upon them one day at drink, in-

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stinctively placing herself under Brent's protection. She gave to him her only possession, a roll of soiled music. On one sheet was written the name, *Raine Goddard.* But the explanation for this did not become apparent for many years. Not until long after man could again read.

Toni still yelled at them whenever they passed below. There were many creatures still living in those high caves. But it was Toni Brent thought about most often. None of the other creatures had the sense to signal. He wanted Toni because she had been able to teach him something. If she knew about signalling, maybe she knew other things.

This, however, was one of many desires he had to let go unfulfilled. Yet it was occupying his mind on the day they sighted the horse grazing in the park. The horse snorted and took fright at sight of the dogs. The dogs took out after it with Pat and Ryan and Woof, the truck driver, following with clubs.

The dogs downed the horse and were putting an end to its miseries when the men came up. Brent followed with the women behind. Right at the moment he was thinking that except for bursts of ideas and cleaning up, women were not good for much except to keep a man warm. They were always getting in trouble and no good for fighting or hunting. When they should be finding food, they got sidetracked by the darnedest things. Like the truck driver's woman nearly getting lost while looking for more of those upright lakes in the depths of which they could see women without bodies . . . just dead heads wearing silly hats.

He came over a hill thinking very ill of women, and looked down upon his men and the dogs grouped around the horse. They had started to rip it apart with teeth, hands and knives, and evidently been interrupted by a band of women. If he had known how to count, Brent would have counted six.

These women were armed and also seemed to be hunting. They stood at a distance and the leader was making sign talk with Pat. One of her women was hauling a metal box that smoked. Another had gone to find brush and wood. The leader was trying to make a trade with Pat to throw his meat into her fire.

The idea was ridiculous, of course. Fire was something that consumed everything it touched. Brent's people had seen it in many places, and experienced its burning heat. They were afraid of it, and kept away from it. It was this fact alone that gave the woman importance in his eyes. She must be very strong for she had conquered fire.

He took charge of the sign talk, and gathered in time that she wanted to throw meat into the fire and then eat it. Her woman came back with wood, but did not throw it all into the metal box at once. She fed it, building up sufficient fire so that she could pour some out upon the ground. Then she threw on the remaining wood.

Brent was fascinated by this accomplishment. He knew it would do no good to burn up the meat. Meat did not even burn well . . . it gave small heat and stank. But they had plenty of meat and he signalled Pat to give her a chunk and see what she would do.

The girl poked it on the end of a piece of wire she carried and hung it over the fire from a stick. She did not put it right in the fire, but held it above. It began to smell, but it was not a stink. It was a delicious savory smell that made Brent's mouth water.

AFTER a time she took it away and, ripping a knife from her waist, sliced off strips. She gave Brent the first strip, recognizing him as the leader. He smelled it and chewed it with vague growls. It was good. It was better than any food he had ever tasted. He looked back at the girl and nodded and smiled. He made sign to Pat to let her help herself.

This was the pert little chorus girl who had been at the ferry slip. Her five followers were what was left of her original clan. Some had died, some been killed, some carried away. She had learned to fear and hate men on the second day, but there was an instinct in her to acquire one which hate could not down. She had captured three, but they had drifted away. Now she had learned the way of getting their friendliness. It was to be useful to them.

Brent reformed his recent thoughts on women and the combined clan set to stripping the horse's still warm carcass. The dogs showed preference for raw meat. But all of Brent's clan preferred it burned by fire. In moments of pleasure the girl cried, *"Eeee!"* and without thought, others imitated it to get her attention.

They had a fresh addition to the clan later that same week. Seven oddly attired individuals jabbering strange sounds simply followed the clan home one day. The leader, a thin little man with cuts and sores showing through the rips in tattered clothing, had once been the celebrated Professor Hitt. About his neck he wore an antique petticoat from an early eighteenth century collection. He had a great treasure, a box full of little round animals that looked like pebbles. They talked inside the box among themselves. When he took the top off, they stopped talking and tried to jump away. Once they had been known as Mexican jumping beans. They were held in some awe by all the clan.

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His second in command was Professor Hirsch. He had lost his trousers and wore a petticoat about his waist. One of their continued arguments in later months was to be whether a skirt should be worn about shoulders or waist. The entire party suffered from starvation and exposure.

All were weighted with treasure.

There was a bag full of round objects with holes in the middle and shining things on the sides. It had been one of the world's most valuable collections of precious-stone rings. Brent thought the objects interesting but not very valuable.

There was something flat which made interesting sounds when closed. It opened mysteriously when its stomach was pressed. Inside it had rows of shiny gray teeth. It was a set of draftsman's pens.

There was a case of many objects like water, but almost round. Pat thought it might be water fruit and bit one. With a loud pop and a tinkle, it crumbled, cutting his lip. His woman noticed the things were just like the things growing on the little trees on the tables in the house.

In later years, some of these were planted in the spring. But no lightbulb trees ever grew.

There were a dozen long, shiny objects which sprouted one piece of the water fruit from their top. They had little noses on their sides. When the noses were pressed, they shot forth sunshine. They made the dark like day. Quickly, Brent recognized their value and forbade their use without his permission. These little suns might set.

There were long sticks with heavy knives on the end of two and a shallow box on three. Their use was immediately determined, and they were prized far beyond the rings. Axes and shovels were needed in the new civilization.

Then there was the startling discovery that one professor had found a use for the bags in his skin that yet was not part of him. The use of pockets made countless tasks easier.

The next group encountered frightened Brent's little clan almost as much as it was frightened. There were about twenty beings of both sexes, and they were come upon unexpectedly as they huddled together about the fountain.

Truly they were a terrifying sight, covered with blazing colors that looked like fire and clouds and glittered in the sun. Once, the attire had clothed opera stars.

Only one of the group won respect. He possessed a weird instrument that made uncanny noise when blown upon and that filled the clan with terror. He could not play the same tune twice. But nobody else could play it at all.

In his soul, Pat felt it to be a thing of evil. But its evil might be turned against the enemy sometime. The man was allowed to keep it.

Foresight was taking root.

Once, weeks before when things had names, it had been called a bagpipe.

The newcomers had only one helpful quality. Their sign language was more rapid and comprehensive. Too, they had a clearly defined use for nine difference grunts while Brent's clan used all grunts for only three meanings.

Chapter Three

THE WOMEN TAKE COMMAND

WINTER, delayed by a kind Providence, now pinched faces blue. Windows broken, the house was damp and chill. Fire for heating was not yet fully understood. It had been banned after almost burning the cave out. There was the first flurry of white dirt. It went away. Hitt covered windows with pieces of material. It was not easy, for no means of holding the covering in place could be found.

Food was giving out. Pat found one of the fierce strange things that were larger than the dogs roaming in the park. The beast was found, and the hunting party attacked it. Suddenly, Pat realized that he and the dogs were left to fight alone. The other men stood at a safe distance, watching.

Pat grew ferocious with a sense of outraged justice. The beast fought wildly, wounding him. He went down, fought on his back, felt consciousness leaving him. In fright, he gave one last stab. Then came blackness.

He awakened to find himself a hero. His stab had cut deeply; the beast had fallen; the dogs had finished it. They would not let the others near their kill. Pat hacked huge chunks of flesh for the dogs, had the men carry the carcass to the house.

He walked ahead, disdainful of creatures who would not fight. He strutted pridefully in an agony of pain before the women. Instinctively, they knew what had happened and silently mocked the other men. Valor received its first ulterior motive, for the women found their own means to punish cowardice.

More beasts, many of them, standing very still in a circle, were discovered. With great caution, the men crept to the attack. But the beasts stood just as still. With a mighty blow, Pat broke his knife on one, stooped to examine the creature. His nose told him that

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it was not of flesh and blood. He stood up disgustedly, wondering what manner of thing made beasts from trees.

The tribe had attacked the merry-go-round.

It grew colder each day. Actual starvation loomed. The clan was rationed as well as Brent could figure in multiples of one. One night each person would receive one whole canned herring. The next, perhaps one tomato or sardine or cracker. There was no way of judging food value.

Hitt had acquired three more skirts about his neck. His Napoleon hat rode proudly above. Hirsch wore two newly discovered sweaters, put on over his legs like pants. A truckload of winter underwear was found and worn over all other clothes. Mrs. Cosgrave wore her fur-lined coat and felt the warmest.

The spring and flowing water in the White Room suddenly stopped. The clan had no way of knowing, but the great tank atop the apartment house had run dry. Water pumps and water mains had long since stopped working. A great fear came over the clan as the fountains in the park dried up too. There was still, and apparently would always be, water in the lake. But the lake water did not taste as good, and was sometimes rancid.

The next certain water was through wild and treacherous and not fully known country. This was a long and arduous trip, fraught with danger of many kinds. Old walls fell, streets caved in; there were mad dogs and insane people, and roaming clans. Sometimes other beings lay upon the tops of caves or stood in the entrances and threw stones at them. There was also an area where the stench of decomposing bodies was terrible and filled them with instinctive dread. Finally, their sense of direction was not yet acute, and sometimes some of them got lost.

Brent was considering these things on the day they discovered and captured Drik and Toni in the park. Not until years later did they learn the full story of how she had escaped from her cave. For weeks, Drik had been living nearby, watching her signal at Brent's clan each day. Somehow he had been drawn to this lone woman and finally gone exploring for her. His adventures finding his way through her apartment house had been many.

He had spent nearly a week after he located her cave by sense and the sound of her voice before he could get through the door. The handle of the door intrigued him and at times he had passed the time turning it. Inside, Toni had seen the knob moving a little and, in time, she had been led to play with it. Of a sudden, she had turned it and the door had opened. After that, there had been the

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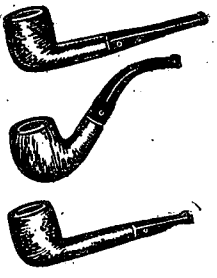

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big experience of learning that the knob did not work the same from both sides. Then, the great step of progress when Drik learned how to snap the lock on and off!

It was his demonstration of this that saved his life, for the clan was now afraid of new members, due to water shortage. The days were raw and bleak. It was dangerous to wander far and there was almost constant thirst. One trip a day for drinking was all the clan could make.

But Toni was a woman of enormous thirst. Out of her necessity to drink came the invention of carrying water in a garbage pail. It was Drik who got the idea of marking trail and avoiding long explorations to find the way back. He had developed trail marking during the weeks of hiding out with Toni.

These talents established their worth to the clan, although Toni immediately began to intrigue for favor and breed trouble. In the fourth week she started a malicious fight between Mrs. Cosgrave and Eee. In the midst of it, they discovered her duplicity and were sharp enough to realize it. Catching her grinning from a place of hiding, they seized her by hands and feet and threw her from the cliff.

Brent now found a peculiarity within himself. He did not approve of private executions, but he approved of this. Many feuds and contentions besetting his people immediately died down. There was to come a time in the future when malicious trouble making became a capital crime, punishable by death.

Drik had led them to fresh food stores in Toni's cave, but now these had given out and starvation loomed again. Brent could not personally go forth so much, diet and privation having made his older body subject to pain. Under Pat he organized a ten-day expedition . . . the number of days he had fingers on both hands. It was to go in search of food . . . go far, if necessary, as far into unknown and dangerous lands as they could see.

This was Pat's first trip abroad. New, unknown sights and smells and sounds and discoveries fell in thick order. Tottering walls crashed as they went by. Once an entire building fell. One of the party disappeared down a black hole and could not be found. Later, he reappeared in front of them from another hole, looking corpselike with fright and smelling worse. He had fallen into a sewer.

Great packs of scavenger dogs had formed but ran at their approach. Often they found skulking human beings. Pat noted with pride that they were not as husky or intelligent as his tribe. Pride was becoming an important characteristic. It was pride of superiority that carried them through some frightening events.

Stepping on a roller skate, he was carried a block downhill on a thrilling ride. There was interesting wreckage on all sides. He found a piece of nice-smelling food. When he bit its soft surface, it emitted frightening sounds. Once, it had been a rubber auto horn.

Then, after hours of search, the stench of rot; the big cave littered with rotting vegetables and fruits and meat; disappointment; the exciting discovery that raiders had not known how to open cans, for there were piles of them! Some, opened on the spot, contained a rich, sweet red. But it was too rich to eat much of. More tasty was the white dirt found scattered about. They licked it up instinctively, for their systems were in need of salt.

They found stairs behind a swinging door. These, too, the raiders had missed. The upper floors were in perfect order. Ryan stepped upon a strange animal that made a noise and spat at him. He fell upon it with his knife, slitting its belly wide. It was a paper sack of flour.

The dogs darted away to return with a small, frightened boy. When he saw Ryan, he stopped crying and led the party to a corner. Here, lying sick beside a woman, was a man dressed like Ryan. Cheerfully, she played with a shining gold watch. She laughed. It was the first laugh the others had heard, and it made them feel good. She was Mrs. Ship, and the man the guard. They had lived upon dried fruit and water from fire buckets. They never remembered how they got there.

With childish enthusiasm, young Peter Ship brought Pat a small animal. It would make good food. It hissed at the dogs. Then it purred and rubbed Pat's shoulder. He decided he would keep the animal.

A vicious-looking rat appeared on top of a barrel of dried fruits. With a leap, the cat bounded onto the rat. There was a short fight. The cat won. Pat approved of its fighting spirit. Also, he instinctively disliked that other thing.

Downstairs, little Peter found strange beings on round legs. They ran at him when he touched them. In fear, he flew to Ryan.

Investigation showed that they had use. They could be pushed and made to carry things. There were many, and Pat smelled them all. Only one was animal, he decided, because of its smell. Once, it had been a meat-delivery cart.

That day, the expedition lost its way home. Long after dark it was still wandering. Suddenly Hitt pointed to the distance with excitement. A beam of sunlight waved slowly in

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It was the wild and dark-eyed girl who discovered the advantages of bathing.

the air. Brent was waving a flashlight out the window. It was the first time the strange thing had been used for a purpose.

For a week the clan moved food. Many times they saw skulking human beings. Several they captured. Some had to be thrown from the windows of the house. There was the one, a husky buck Pat would have liked to keep, who stole everybody's covering while they slept, stacking it in the center of the main room. Another ate books. A third screamed incessantly. A fourth was lazy. Then there were others who were sick and died.

It was the day they moved the bags of foodstuff which they did not understand how to use that they met John Scappella, one-time

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taxi driver, and John Smith, one-time jeweler. Scappella came out of a side street, his arms loaded with big knives. His skin was sloughing from too much raw meat, and his head ached from water turning stale. But he was happy. He had discovered an unraided antique store and found many shining swords.

He was brought up short by the giant Pat. When Pat took the swords and put them on some sacks of flour, Scappella merely grinned. He felt no instinctive possession of the swords. But he felt that he should go where they went. He liked them and would stay with them.

Nearer home they met John Smith. He carried two heavy bags. Mr. Smith was emaciated but noticeably neat. Pat stopped him with instinctive authority. He enjoyed stopping people now. He looked into the bags. He was struck with wonder!

Gold! Gold dishes!

AT THE house, Brent considered this. He himself had a gold shield. It was the symbol of authority. This man had more gold, and should be more powerful. But, quite obviously, since he was shaking with fear while Pat held him, he was not. Brent took unto himself the gold and signed to Pat to keep the man.

That night, watching him in his den, Pat was surprised to see Mr. Smith disrobe. He took something off his neck which was quite complicated. Pat made him dress and undress again. Then he took him before Brent and had him repeat.

Brent was impressed by Mr. Smith's movements with his necktie. Correctly, he tied a four-in-hand knot several times. Brent gave him a can of meat in reward, and Pat showed him how to open it on something sharp.

A week later, Mr. Smith's aptitude with his hands had created a standard way of tying a knot that would hold. It was one of the most important events in new history. He was much admired, and set the fashion of neatness. Also, he taught the tribe how to dress and undress. This was immensely important, for the entire tribe, excepting himself and Mrs. Cosgrave, who wore only her overcoat, had acquired fetid sores from wearing clothes continuously. Soon, Smith was given the important post of Keeper of the House and Storerooms under Ryan.

Clan life now ran smoothly until Woof, the truck driver, awakened one night to find his woman gone. Instinctively, he knew she had gone to Smith, who was still sleeping in Pat's room. There she was, attempting to vamp the little man. The truck driver started to kill Smith. Pat awakened to break it up by strong-arm measures in the moonlight. He threw the young man and his woman out of the house.

The next day the matter was taken before Brent. There was instinctive sympathy for the truck driver. But Smith now belonged to Brent. An attack upon him was equal to damaging Brent's property. Brent settled the matter by ordering Pat to go forth and find Smith a woman and having the outraged younger man chastise his woman before the assembled group. Everybody enjoyed this diversion, including Woof. He was rather sorry his woman did not immediately stray again.

Pat picked ten of his huskiest men and departed.

He had not returned a week later when the entire clan became violently sick with stomach trouble. In the process of eating things from cans and boxes, they had eaten an unknown, nice-tasting powder.

All were sitting in one room, very sick. Mr. Smith, very green about the gills, suddenly astounded the clan by a mighty belch. It resounded with a force and quality of tone demanding attention even from the sick. This in itself raised his status considerably.

But, lo, he performed the new world's first miracle. The mouths of the tribe were covered with froth. But from Mr. Smith's quivering mouth issued a large, translucent bubble. It floated ceilingward. Many more followed. The clan was immensely impressed. Here was mystic, incomprehensible power. Here was magic! Years later it was learned that the powder had been soap.

When the clan recovered, Mr. Smith found himself something of a high priest. The new civilization soon acquired religion. Water, the broomstick, and the mop became its idols.

Brent now noticed that clan life did not run so smoothly with Pat away. He must not send him forth hereafter. He noted that life was easier as the number of the clan increased. Some were more useful than others. The women were smarter about many things. Mrs. Cosgrave was smartest of all. But she was perpetually after some man. In turn, she had vamped each of the professors.

Three weeks passed without sign of Pat. The nights were bitter cold now, and their stillness shattered by bloodcurdling cries of roving scavenger packs. One night, a pack invaded the lobby.

The next day, Smith and Professor Hitt investigated to see what could be done to keep strangers out. Hitt discovered a beautiful silver thing which swung like a branch in the wind. It swung straight out. There was a sharp click. It would not move after that, and it kept the clan from leaving the building except by windows.

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John Scappella and Drik, intrigued by the thing's shininess and intricate mechanism, spent the day alternately rubbing it and trying to get it open. Drik made suggestions. Scappella did the work. Toward evening, he succeeded. He had learned how to bolt and unbolt a door. He was given the duty of bolting it nightly.

Heavy white dirt fell that night. Drifting in the windows, it made little pools upon the floor. Hitt tasted the pools and was greatly puzzled.

The dirt had turned to water!

Gloom possessed the clan. Snow caked upon window sills, making the house colder. Most of the floors were wet. Colds and stomach trouble were taking toll. Drinking from the lake involved getting legs wet. Knees were raw and achy. The raw wind bit through scanty clothing.

Unexpectedly, Pat reappeared, alone. Glowing with good health and cuts and bruises, he was now a man of the world. He wore an animal skin turned inside out. Once it had been a banker's coat. Beneath it, the hard muscles of his bare chest quivered with excitement.

He had a story to tell. But he could not tell it. He had so few grunts and gestures to speak with and could tell only of things which the clan had seen and understood.

There was soup, for instance. They had cooked most of their meat and some of their other things since Eee taught them. But who would have thought of cooking liquids that put out fire? And of cooking in drinking cups? Now he had learned not only how to cook liquids, but that sometimes they burned. He had learned how to avoid the burns, and how to make glorious savoury dishes out of almost nothing and water. A can of beef, for instance, he could devour in three mouthfuls, and he did not often feel a hunger for raw potatoes. But the beef and potatoes thrown into a metal pot together and allowed to simmer made big bowls of delectable stew! You could make almost anything taste good that way. Salt bettered the taste. But a cake of soap had not improved a stew at all. It had made him sneeze to eat it, and given him stomach pains. At that, though, he had felt strong and vigorous after the effects wore off. Many of the toxic poisons had been carried from his body.

Then there was water on three sides of the land. How could he explain that? He tried to tell them, but they thought he meant fountains. Then they thought he meant the river was rising over them as the lake sometimes rose, and the clan grew very much frightened.

He had seen a clan over a thousand strong. How could he explain a thousand? How could he tell them that he had seen a man strike fire from a small stick and a box so that the clan did not need to carry its fire in a metal container, but could strike a fire any time it chose from that magic stick and box? And how could he tell them about the smoke eater who smoked a pipe?

But with their limited language, and struggling with his imagination, he tried to tell his tale of adventure and war and discovery. He felt the meagerness of his imagination and was thankful for the questioning help of Drik. Drik was useless from the standpoint of reliability or being of physical help, but Pat was coming to appreciate that imaginative quality of his. He could think of incredible things, some of which worked out, and he noted everything . . . for instance, the precise number of a flock of pigeons he had seen.

It was Drik who had first caught his halting attempt to tell of the loaf of bread twelve blocks long but stinking with rot, and Drik who helped him explain this strange thing. In other things, Drik's insatiable curiosity for details drew his story out. The details of the countless times he had been lost . . . the great distance he had been . . . the thousands of dead and insane; far away the streets were rotten with corpses . . . the packs of scavenger dogs that roamed the city . . . his countless battles and the men he had killed. He exhibited proud scars and two gloriously bloody swords as proof.

He had found great stores of clothes and food and strange objects to the south . . . more gold than could ever be moved . . . and great buildings, like the one they lived in only larger, reaching clear into the clouds . . . and the strange animal that was shiny, yet breathed and talked. It had feet like the wheels of delivery carts, yet when he got into it and touched it, it ran away with him and carried him blocks! It was still growling when it threw him out.

He had been sick from bad food and very cold, and he had drunk water that was not like their water, and burned his throat. He had no way to know that this was gasoline. He had so many experiences he could not remember them all.

Brent, in turn, told Pat what had happened while he was gone. He gave him a can of meat. But he had not forgotten Pat's mission. Where was the woman for Smith? It looked lately as if they needed many women, in fact, for many of the men had developed interest in the other sex.

Pat looked sly. He turned and fled. Suddenly, there was a great clamor before the house.

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The clan rushed to windows, fearful of attack. Brent saw a clan many times as large as his . . . loaded with riches in many boxes they pushed on round legs . . . a clan strong with health and warmly dressed. Carried by two of Pat's captives was a thing frightening in aspect. It had a big red eye and spat smoke. It was a wood burning iron stove.

This was one of their greatest treasures, for all of the stoves found to date had been electric and were useless. But this burned many things, and yet held the fire captive. Truly, Pat's homecoming was warm and sumptuous.

His prisoners numbered over two hundred, every one healthy and powerful. There were more men than women. This was too bad. Each prisoner carried much treasure, and in the carts they pushed was more. There were foods and soft clothing and furs. There were many things never seen before.

Above all, there was the stove!

And more . . . Pat had learned to use it. He had it put beneath the cave that went straight up, and it burned there and gave warmth without filling the place with smoke. And it heated enough food for all.

The captives, too, held Brent's approval. There were beautiful women and strong young men. There were some immediately distinguishable as having brains. Pat told, with great pride, of how he had weeded out and killed those who would not benefit the clan. Had he known it, among those he killed as useless had been many of the city's most influential in the now dead past.

Among the prisoners of worth he brought the former mayor; little Gus Shueller; two men who had solved the mystery of fountain pens; and fifteen huskies in tattered blue garments who looked much like Pat. Each bore signs of the conflict which had made them Pat's slaves, and Brent noted that they vied in pride of Pat's prowess.

For all this booty, Pat had lost the lives of only two of his men.

A dark-eyed, voluptuous girl rubbed against Pat. His woman saw, turned, and left the room. Pat felt sorry at that. He hurried after her. The first clumsy declaration of future fidelity by man to woman took place. Later, his woman sat lovingly beside him. She bore a black eye, but she was happy.

One of the new women vamped Ryan. This was a blow to Mrs. Cosgrave. As her diet suffered, she in turn began to realize the advantages of fidelity. He now kept both women with him.

Smith and the professors, as senior bachelors, had first pick of the women. Smith drew a woman desired by the truck driver. He bartered her for the truck driver's woman. This was all right with three of them, but the woman he got from Woof showed sudden objections. Smith was all very well to flirt with . . . he could give a woman a lot of little extra tidbits. But what woman wanted a little man like that for keeps?

Smith was at a loss what to do. Woof was laughing at him and his prestige was threatened in the clan. He thought of beating the woman with his fists, but he was not sure he could do it. He suddenly remembered the dog leash he used as a belt. He ripped it off and started to give the woman a sound thrashing. She cried piteously and he felt rather ashamed of himself. But looking around, he saw approval upon the faces of those watching. He looked back quickly and sensed a faint sullen mockery in the girl at his feet. He would not have done it of himself, but the approval of the crowd led him to thrash her more.

The girl stopped crying in surprise. She had not fooled him! That brought respect, even though more pain. He was a smart man. If she could not fool him, nobody else in the world could, of course. He was smarter than any man. She was a very loving mate after that. The fact that he had not been fooled by her first cries brought him fresh respect in the clan.

Smith thought about that considerably. As a matter of fact, he had been completely fooled. It was a fluke that he had turned to beating her the second time. It seemed then that a man could not be entirely honest. He had to keep the world from knowing too much about himself and let it think what it wanted. That even applied to his own woman.

The rest of the women were paired off as far as possible. There were some very pretty women who did not get much respect. The things which won a woman respect were hard to define, but among them Brent detected reliability, calmness in moments of danger, good nature, cooking ability, and regard for the wishes of her man. Everybody seemed instinctively to respect a woman for that.

There was one very puzzling point to Brent. Men would try to get a woman away from some other man. If they succeeded, they often had no use for her themselves. But if she turned them down, they looked at her in a new way, and did more for her than for women they could have.

However, it was the wild, dark-eyed girl who vamped every man without regard who gave the clan its greatest boon. She was of positively no use other than ornamental. She spent most of the time trying to make herself beautiful. They had long since learned the use of mirrors from Mrs. Cosgrave, but it was

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this girl who discovered how to use a mirror in different angles of light, and inadvertently discovered signalling with a mirror.

The next week, drinking at the lake, she fell in. Chill and wet, she ripped off her clothes, rubbing herself briskly with a blanket. Much of the dirt of past months came off. After she was warmed, she felt better. She felt *cleaner;* healthier. She saw she was more desirable, too. In spite of the cold, she began bathing frequently. It did much to rid her of sores and infection and the small bugs.

Smith noted the fresh cleanliness of her body and that the bathing was making her healthier. He took this up with Hitt and Brent. Professor Hitt, suffering terribly from chafing, sores and dirt, made his own personal experiments. So much better did he feel that he convinced Brent of the necessity for a bathing law. It was the first rigid law of the new civilization. Baths for all once every five days, with Pat and his huskies ready to douse any shirkers. A few died from pneumonia, but in general it was a progressive measure.

Quickly now, with fire, cooked foods, and appreciation of cleanliness, the clan's health improved. As if waiting to give man this meager chance at survival, the fierce blast of winter set in. Deep snow and ice and frost, howling rain and slashing sleet, covered the city. Brent's tribe, for a few brief weeks, was shut in.

They found time to organize their small knowledge; time to think. It was Drik who taught them that facts learned from one experience might be applied to another. For instance, that the same motions which opened the gate in the lobby might open a different gate of somewhere else.

EXILE!

No death penalty carried the tragedy and fear of that grim sentence. It was given not only for the breaking of established rules, but for actions harmful to the clan, which had no precedent. It quickly taught the clan members to think before acting. It was given the first time to the man who carried fire to a hanging curtain to see if it would burn without regard for what damage it might do if it did burn.

The sentence was swift and simple. A few guttural grunts, a brief gesture, and two of Pat's huskies cast the screaming unfortunate into the street.

Maxwell, former publisher, was next to go. A gossip, he had caused one of Pat's huskies to kill a valuable person, one of the professors, through error. Investigation proved the professor had been sick and the killer's wife ministering to him.

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From the paneless windows, the clan watched Maxwell thrown into the sleet storm, watched him turn in terror and beat at the great silver-grilled door as a pack of skulking scavenger dogs circled around him. His screams and the howl of the pack cut through the cry of the wind. Then the cruel kill, the pack snarling and ripping his flesh away before he was dead.

Next went Kiki Randolph of the mirrors, caught in the act of trying to throw blame of theft onto the beautiful silent one who had placed herself under Brent's protection. At the corner, she was carried away by four marauders. There was the first flicker of savage mass humor as the clan considered how surprised the marauders would be to discover the trouble they had captured.

Other expulsions for theft, dirtiness, sickness, and laziness followed. Drik, friendly, imaginative, lazy, was called before Brent for expulsion. His wits saved him. In a flash of incredible imagination, he put forward the thought that some tribe far greater than themselves had made the things they were using. Who?

So sweeping was this original thought that he was decided to be of value after all. Nobody had ever questioned where the city or anything in it came from. He was instructed to keep busy with such thoughts in the future.

Mrs. Cosgrave fell into displeasure when Brent learned that she had kept Hitt from an entire day of experiment on ways and means of cooking. Her punishment would have been severe had she not glanced out the window of her den while combing her hair.

Breathless, she appeared before Brent. A clan, perhaps ten times larger than theirs, was roaming through the park! In great fear, the clan rushed to the top row of caves and saw that she told the truth. Pat mobilized for defense, instinctively warning for quiet.

Hitt, the ex-mayor, Scappella, and Drik went off to barricade the windows and doors of the lobby floor. It was the first piece of construction work, and the mayor became a personage. He it was who thought of using planks and firewood and, almost unconsciously, rope! Some of the planks had nails in them and stuck together.

For three days the clan stayed at posts awaiting attack. But the enemy disappeared without coming nearer. Scouts reported them moving far downtown, a husky lot, savage, without knives or swords, but powerful. Thereafter, Brent ordered a celebration of thanks. Food came forth in quantity. Good cheer filled the clan; punishments and hate were forgotten.

White dirt now covered the ground so thickly and it was so cold outside that the clan spent most of its time indoors. There were no scouting or raiding parties. The two daily trips to the park, trips for water and wood were the only occasions to go forth. Heavy drifts of snow coming in the windows caused the floors to be damp most of the time. Smith noted that rugs drank water. A committee studied the strange fact and learned water would be drunk up by rags and then could be squeezed out.

When this was done, the places beneath were cleaner. Mopping and scrubbing became daily duties. Drik and the mayor learned to make things secure with nails. For the first time the windows were fairly well covered. The house grew warm and smelly. Tempers rose, and fights became more common. There were many fights over who would sleep in beds and next to windows. Housing was needed, but the clan must stay together for self-protection.

Little Gus Shueller astounded the clan by inquiring what lay behind the closed holes throughout the house. Drik, ever on the verge of expulsion, recklessly suggested that there might be other caves like the one they were in. His insanity was realized. But, lo, when a closed hole was broken through, another large cave, stinking and clammy and wet from rotting flesh of things that had died, lay before them!

The discovery led to scouting the whole building. Scappella found a board with queer dead bugs and knives upon it. Some of the bugs looked like bugs he had seen on apartment doors. Taking the board, he went in search of duplicates. He found one. Little Gus thought the knife below the bug might fit into the funny hole in the door. It did! Eventually, it opened it! Locks and keys had been discovered. Scapella was a mighty man!

Within himself, the idea of discovering how shiny things worked became a tangible thought. John Scappella found his interest in life. He was to become the clan's first skilled mechanic.

The work of thoroughly cleaning the apartments took many days. Mr. Smith demanded inspection. No bit of mold or refuse or rot must remain. All rugs were taken up, all floors washed with melted snow. Drik and little Gus were given a whole cave to themselves as reward. Scappella did not want one.

The beautiful silent girl found a three-legged thing with a long row of great teeth. It bit at her. It made sounds. She was frightened, but something about those sounds made her instinctively go back. She found how to break the thing's jaw so it would not bite. After that, it made sounds when she touched its teeth.

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It was a piano.

The little captured leader who had once fought in the Stock Exchange and now was known as "Haw," asked Brent for the girl. Brent was agreeable. Haw was a good worker. The girl looked closely at Haw, waited as if listening to some inner voice, then shook her head.

Brent respected her wishes. He would not give her up.

In the apartment of the imaginative Drik, Scappella discovered a strange thing that aroused his curiosity. It shone like moonlight and was large and had legs and a mouth which opened. It also had a tail. Inside its mouth was a great black tongue and many things which glistened. He touched one. Instantly, the thing barked! Then it made sounds like the wind. Then there were sounds nobody had ever heard before, beautiful sounds which enthralled them.

In all New York there were possibly not more than ten hand-winding phonographs. This one was to have a profund effect on history. For electric current was gone, and electric machines could not be operated.

Scappella learned to make the thing talk. He tried to barter it with Drik. Drik was keen. He liked the machine. It was valuable. It was worth a dog like Brent's that would stay with him and come when grunted at, or his weight in meat.

John Scappella found a whole cave full of women—maybe as many as were in the clan already! Hastily, a raiding party was organized.

It was cold outside, and the warriors' feet were cut by sharp ice through the soles of their worn-out shoes. But boldly they attacked the cave. Inside, they could see many women. There were no men. Hitt saw one in an upper window who took his fancy. Petticoats flying from around his neck, a large sword in hand, he forced his way to the front, to the side of Pat. They pushed mightily against the barricaded door. Suddenly, great hard pieces of white dirt pelted down upon them. Then the cave began to fall.

THE WARRIORS ran back to safety. They looked. No, the cave had not fallen. Women were standing on the top making soft white dirt into hard little balls while others stood with bricks in hand.

The toll of wounded had been heavy. This was the first planned defense Pat had encountered. He felt shame that women should drive them off. He grew crafty. Messengers were sent to Brent for the odd things that spat sunshine. Pat and his warriors pretended defeat and hid around a corner until dark.

The ruse worked. Silently and unexpectedly attacking, they forced the door. The women fought madly and tore and scratched. Pat, at an order, had the flashlights turned upon them. The women were blinded and frightened and could not fight so well. Using fists and swords, Pat's warriors soon won the battle. Hitt captured a woman and bore teeth marks on his cheek ever after. Great general that he was, Pat learned three things for future warfare. First, surprise attack. Second, frightening the enemy with unknown tricks. Third, not to fight women if it could be avoided! They were too vicious.

The raid was a great success, netting over sixty women, mostly young and husky. There had been no men. Smith insisted upon cleanliness, however, and the next day, in the midst of a snowstorm, the women were hurled into the lake. Four were lost beneath the ice. Three others died from cold. The remainder were better for the bath. Pat's warriors suffered cuts and scratches.

Drik took two women, parted with his phonograph and records. Hitt, little Gus, and Scappella retired to study the new machine. Brent's woman friend, who had discovered the piano, joined the students. Some of the records were very old. But the little group did not know that. They played them over and over. Instinctively, they tried to imitate the sounds.

Little Gus first noticed the difference between voice and music. Voice was something like their own grunts. At the end of a month he astounded the clan by distinctly pronouncing:

"Yes, we have no bananas," "Baby, I love you," and "Mairzydoats."

Nobody knew what the words meant. But that they were words and could be learned was proven. Little Gus received a sword and was allowed full-fledged manhood for this. Soon he could say many words and sing a few tunes. But his own speech remained limited to perhaps a dozen grunts and simple sign language. The silent woman learned to hum. She became known by that name—*Hum*.

The new women learned quickly. All were smart and soon contented with their new lot.

Winter was leaving. A few days of slush; then suddenly it was gone.

Green came upon the trees. Clean smells scented the air. Mates were selected and households established.

Life again became interesting and exciting. The clan turned to the open, scouting for new and thrilling discoveries.

Smith was the only darkening influence. He made the clan take baths.

Many more swords were found, and these were useful, for the men of the clan were not all armed. Part of the fire was moved out near

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the lake and tended there so that food could be prepared in the open.

Joy and gladness filled the clan's heart.

Suddenly, the first child was born. There was great excitement among the men. But the women accepted the fact as if they had been expecting it all along.

Professor Hitt grew furious that he had not the means of expressing himself. He felt a profound disdain for women. Here, perhaps was greatest mystery in memory! And women behaved as if it were an everyday occurrence!

As a matter of fact, for about ten days it was.

Pat's wife, too, presented him with a lusty, bawling infant. Instinctively, he felt he had something to do with its presence. At first he disliked the little thing. Yet he was curious about it. After a time, his woman held it near his face. A tiny hand wandered out to grab his nose.

Pat felt an unknown sensation, a new instinct. He liked it after that. He felt differently, more possessive, and softer toward his woman, too.

For the first time, Mr. Smith's will met defeat. In a body, the women threatened revolt if Brent forced their offspring to be thrown into the lake.

The change of weather brought to Brent his first thought of time. Within his memory, there had been three different types of weather. He knew that, except on rainy days, the sun rose and set with some regularity. It was not very regular, however, for he had learned that sometimes it stayed out longer than other times. It was staying out longer these days. There was a great deal of rain and soft wind, now.

Soon he must get the tribe back to work. But just now the lying around and idle play and talk seemed to be doing great good. Bodies were healthier, spirits were better, sign language was improving rapidly. This, he felt, was important. He noted there was a great deal of exchange of women. Both men and women seemed to be choosing their companions.

There was something mystic and not quite understandable in this. The men no longer regarded women only as property. Women had a say in matters. The most valuable women were those who could do something well, such as cook or find new uses for things.

Mrs. Cosgrave suddenly ceased running after other men. A soft look came into her eyes; she had settled down as wife to Ryan. Then Mrs. Cosgrave presented Ryan with triplets. And great was the wonder and respect of the clan.

The winds now held a caress, and it grew warmer by the day. Much time was spent in the park. The clan grew peaceful and secure; no unusual events occurred. Pat's dog now followed the fashion and produced a litter of six pups, of which Mrs. Cosgrave showed great jealousy, the number being double her own remarkable performance.

There was a great deal to do. Knowledge of various things was divided among members of the clan, and each wanted to learn what the others knew. Smith had all rugs, drapes, and other heavy materials brought to the park for airing. Hum, feeling her importance diminishing, pondered long over what she could do to attract attention. She was in fear that if she did not reestablish her importance, Brent might give her to some man. And there was none she wanted. So it was that she found that rugs and materials could be cleaned, just as floors could be cleaned with them and bodies cleaned by water. This was of great importance, for it helped to rid the clan of head lice and annoying body vermin.

Toward mid-afternoon one April day, little Gus and Peter Ship ran up to Pat with great excitement. With gleaming eyes they grunted and made gestures. He, too, became excited. Gathering his fifteen huskies and Hitt, who was washing his petticoats, he ran off with little Gus.

At sundown, the clan lazily gathered up its belongings, drank at the lake and fountain, which was now spouting again, and started toward home. Men and women, preoccupied with their own thoughts, paid little attention to anything else. As they neared the house, they could see Haw leaning from his window and waving. Some waved back. Then they could hear him shouting excitedly. They could not understand what he said, for sounds were still limited to about forty meanings. But they looked where he pointed, back into the park.

Terror froze their hearts.

Over the brow of a hill swept a motley, wind-bronzed and ferocious tribe of beings—many of them naked, none well clothed, all grasping clubs.

They filled the horizon. There were more than a thousand! All men, all as husky at Pat!

With a bloodcurdling war cry, they swept down the hill and after Brent's tribe. Their hair was matted with filth, their bodies reeking with odor. They were terrible. Like an ominous brown wave of death they spread out and came on, invincible.

Insane fear possessed the tribe. Turning to fight, a few brave men were killed in the park. Others were overtaken and felled as they ran. The rest rushed to the house, slamming the great silver grille shut at the entrance to the lobby. Some of their own clan were locked

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outside now, early victims of the cruel enemy.

Numbed with fear, panic-stricken, Brent's tribe went entirely out of hand. A few reenforced the grille; others went for weapons; some stood at windows and hurled whatever came to hand. But most ran pell-mell throughout the building, getting in the way or hiding far back in deep closets.

Brent wished for Pat. He himself knew little of fighting, could command little respect amid the pandemonium. Defense seemed useless. Already the brown horde were leaning boards and logs against the building, ramming at the grille and at the blockaded windows of the first floor.

Outside the building, a thousand utter beasts.

Inside, the dying hope of a new civilization.

PART TWO

Chapter One

ORDER OUT OF CHAOS!

ACROSS the park, the sun sank red and fiery. Dusk settled over the scene of battle. Night came.

Brent, old man that he was, felt disgust for the weaklings who ran and hid. Seizing his favorite sword, he rushed to the defense of the second floor. As he passed the main hall, he saw Eee commanding a few women who lit firebrands and threw them into the howling mob below. Ryan passed him, running for the roof. A few moments later he had dislodged a huge cornice which crashed into the enemy, spreading havoc. But their leader gathered them, brought them back to the attack.

The second floor was in great danger. Brent, taking the defense of a window, saw a cruel visage appear before him. Hideous and bestial, it gleamed in the light of a flare the man carried. Plunging his sword, he felt it push through flesh. The figure leaped back, screaming, to the ground below.

The enemy now had logs and planks against all the second-floor windows. Streaming up like monkeys, they were overpowering the defenders.

There was a roar of hate as Haw sent a plank and four men hurtling backward into the horde. At the same time, Brent saw a husky figure leap through a window, pause to grab up a woman, disappear into the house. Smith was half jerked through a window by a husky arm, saved by Hirsch, who gouged the attacker's eye.

Rapidly it grew dark. Below, Brent saw countless bodies glistening in the flare of torches, their visages fierce and cruel. He struck back many from his window. A club glanced his head. He fell back, conscious, but unable to move. There were many of the enemy in the room now. He could hear the cries of others coming from other rooms.

Memory, like a kaleidoscope, gave him pictures from the day he had discovered water. His mind functioned clearly. In a flash, he saw how far above these beings his own clan had progressed, had an idea of how much further they had to go.

For the first time, he had realization of the meaning of civilization and how near his own people had come to solving that dim mystery. He saw the defects of his own rule, realized the lack of order and purpose of his government. He wondered how Smith would fare as slave in a tribe that knew no cleanliness. He thought of the two young girls under his protection. He thought of Pat.

Instinctively, he knew consciousness was leaving him. There was a deafening roar of triumph from the enemy. Then a deep, endless hush. He could not see now; he could not hear. His head felt queer. There was a great bright sun in his mind. He could hear his heart beating.

Weird, terrible noises, the deep hush, utterly dead blackness, the impossible burst of sunlight within his head, sinking, then plunging into limitless, fearful space—Brent lost consciousness.

Yet even as his mind dimmed he had a kaleidoscopic flash of mixed scenes and feelings. Eee, her face black from smoke and ash, driving frightened women to split wood, throwing grease-soaked flares and torches from the windows—Haw, choking from smoke, hauling a blazing mattress to the window—Mrs. Cosgrave, screaming wildly, throwing whatever heavy objects came to hand down upon the enemy.

Bravery amongst the women. While men, for the most part, hid in blind fear.

But there were those whose bravery and loyalty could be counted upon. Diminutive Mr. Smith fighting groggily with a giant twice his size—Drik hurling glass to break beneath the feet of the enemy—Ryan, streaming with blood, swinging an ax mightily—

Dirty bodies gleaming bronze-red in smoky

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light—endless columns of the enemy leaping through windows—a savage laughing brutally as he swept up a woman—the stench of the invaders—a giant brown-skinned warrior tearing an antagonist limb from limb—another one plucking the eyes of his fallen adversary, eating them with gusto—torches bobbing, throwing red, ominous shadows upon the walls—the utter lostness of defeat—the terror of that dark void into which he, Brent, was hurtling, mixed with a great feeling of peace that the end had come—

In the street, the enemy leader gave a guttural roar of triumph as one of his men tossed him a woman from a window. His blood beat hot with battle lusts, but craftily he remained upon the ground, fearing an attack from behind that silver grille that had closed so easily and now could not be beaten open.

The leader was a striking figure.

He was large and muscular, with a great red gash running across the bronze skin of his naked chest. He carried a knotted club and was clothed only with furs hanging from a silver belt about his waist. Intelligence, power, alertness, leadership showed from beneath the dirt and beard of his tanned face. He had caught the woman as if she were a chip and now held her under one arm while pointing directions with the other. A grimace of rage crossed his fierce face as he saw a log holding six of his warriors pushed back from the building. He ached to take part in the fight himself. But there was the dangerous grille and the men behind it. Torches and missiles hurled from the building failed to budge him from his stance.

One of his warriors thrust a torch out a fourth-story window, waving it victoriously. Mightily, his tribe joined him in a deep-throated, savage shout of triumph. It was dark now. Light came only from myriad red-flamed torches.

The leader was pleased with the victory. From behind the hill, earlier in the day, he had studied these people. They were rich in clothes and caves and food and many things his clan did not possess. They had weapons better than his clubs. Their women were good to look upon. He leered at the one he was holding, tossed her to a warrior, and scrambled up a log into the house. He did not fear an attack from behind that grille now.

Suddenly, his limbs froze in the midst of climbing. Not since a dim, hazy day long, long ago—a day when the world had crashed down and the earth shot up about him—had he felt such fear. Within the building, in the street, action stopped. There was a murmur of consternation. Then complete silence. Besieged beside attacker, enemy beside enemy, leaned curiously from windows, all thoughts of battle forgotten, a great awe upon all.

The sun, brighter than it had ever been before, as large across as two men's lengths, was sitting in the street—was coming closer!

Was attacking them!

Turning and twisting, it burned those within its path, drove them into a huddled mass before the building. Its light was blinding, its heat terrible. A pile of wounded and dead bodies withered as the clans saw its ray center. There was a horrible shriek of pain from a wounded warrior who was only partly in its path and could not crawl free.

Instinctively, the warriors dropped clubs, fell upon their knees. The enemy leader, his jaws trembling with fear, dropped to the street. Something brushed him as he squatted, swiftly climbed the log, and disappeared within the building. He could not see it well because of the intense light. The silence continued, dread, fearful, mysterious.

Suddenly, from the sky came a terrible noise striking horror into the bones of warriors. Like the wind, yet not like it, a noise from far places, a voice of unknown things which lurked in space and could not be seen, but might give harm.

Some of Brent's clan heard, amazed. They knew the terrible noise. It came from the animal with many arms of which only one could make talk, the bagpipe. But the sun! How came it here in the middle of the night? It had attacked their enemies. Would it come into the building and attack them, too? Below them they saw its rays turn upon a piece of wood, saw the wood spring into flame. Then the rays dimmed. The terrible noise from the sky ceased.

Pat, roaring with authority, appeared. He was fierce and angry, yet possessed of a dignity and force new to the clan. A great shining sword hung from each of his wrists. Upon his head, held by a strap, was a leg, standing inverted and upright. It was brown and looked something like the feet they took off at night in the days before they wore out. He carried a long stick with a great colored thing on the end which fluttered in the breeze. Instinctively, he recognized the enemy leader, walked over, and jerked him to his feet.

Crudely, the two talked with sign language. Guttural grunts punctuated their conversation. Once the leader straightened as if about to strike. Pat lifted his banner. Instantly the sun rays became bright again. From the windows and a circle in the street, the two clans saw the enemy leader shrink, finally nod his head, admit defeat.

With swift authority, Pat made his orders clear. Brent's clan forgot fright, mobilized in

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the lobby. They threw wide the silver grille, and drove the enemy from upstairs and the street into the spacious cave.

Crowded, frightened, not knowing what to expect, the enemy crouched through the night and waited uneasily. The room grew hot and air bad. They stirred in a mass as if by an instinctive, silent command. Pat, on guard with his clan, felt that the captives were planning a break. He grunted once. Instantly, there was a blast of the fearful noises again, this time right in their midst. Through the grille came the bright rays of the sun, which had set twice already. Its rays were hot and blistering. It threw the shadow of the terrible thing that made noises onto the wall, like a huge, strange bat with a human head, and with many arms. The enemy could not see the bat itself, but they saw the shadow and cringed in fear. They accepted defeat after that. The presence of the sun was bad enough. But the unearthly noise and shadow of a bagpipe was final.

Sadness for those who had died, aches and pains of broken bones and twisted muscles were forgotten. Joy of victory, the excitement of seeing the captured, the mystery of Pat's return and the sun in the middle of the night, made the next morning momentous in the clan's history.

BRENT wakened where he had fallen, his head sore, an arm sprained. He was curious to learn what had turned the tide of battle, but he saw there was no time for questions. Descending into the hot, fetid lobby, he saw the size and power of the enemy, realized he must deal carefully. He had his great chair and the royal goblet, and his gold brought to him.

Before the two clans, he presented his favorite sword to Pat and a gold plate to Hitt. Pat strutted in his glory. Then, pausing in the middle of a step, he stopped and pondered. After a moment, without any explanations, he turned and gave the sword to little Gus Shueller. The clan was curious, but learned nothing of the reason. Nor of the mystery of the sun, which now shone in the sky as usual.

Brent gave valuable knives and soft cushions and articles of apparel to those he knew had fought in his defense the night before. He felt shame for the cowardice of his clan, but pride that they were so much more civilized than the enemy, whose bodies reeked with an odor of filth that nauseated him. He had Scappella bring down his animal and show the enemy how it would talk and sing and make strange, beautiful noises when its tongue was changed, its tail twisted, and its teeth pushed. Smith, with swollen head and aching ribs, yet urged that the enemy be immediately killed or bathed. Brent gestured to him to be still.

He made signs at the leader. The leader did not understand very well. Brent had some of the rapidly diminishing canned meat brought down. He gave it to the leader. With the simplest sign language he could think of, he showed that the captives could live on with his clan if they would obey orders. Pat came forward to sign that if this didn't suit them, he could call down the sun and burn them all up.

The leader ate of the meat and found it good. He was mystified by these people, though. He had expected death. Instead, they gave him meat. These people were fat and rich and untroubled by dirt and running festers. They had good food and shelter much better than the cave he had spent the winter in. They knew a great deal, for they were able to talk among themselves, while his clan had the greatest difficulty expressing thoughts. These men had fine weapons and clothes. Their women were desirable. They commanded the sun to fight for them, and brought strange, screaming, frightening bats, larger than many men, down from the sky. They had queer animals that made marvelous noises. And they wanted his clan! He could not understand it. If he were victor, he would have killed the men and kept the women.

He asked about his women and children, whom he had left across the park. Brent

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nodded. The leader turned, made the offer clear to his clan. He impressed upon them that if they failed to obey orders, these strange beings would turn the sun upon them. Their faces relaxed. Some smiled. This was better than victory! They lost their fear and looked about curiously. They realized their captors were more intelligent. They wanted to learn the things their captors knew. They wanted to have the things their captors had. The leader stooped and placed Brent's foot upon his neck.

All the captives were young and strong. They were the remains of many laboring neighborhoods that had escaped the catastrophe. They had lived a hand-to-mouth existence, spent a hard winter barely clothed, seldom well fed, always cold. None but the hardiest had survived.

With their women and children, the clan numbered almost twenty-five hundred. They were fed and taken to the lake to drink. Pat saw that many of the women were attractive beneath their filth. Mr. Smith pressed his plea for bathing again, and Brent granted the request. But getting them to bathe was another matter. Not even the threat of calling down the sun would overcome their fear of water.

Mrs. Cosgrave dropped most of her clothes and jumped suddenly into a deep spot in the lake and paddled about. Shamed, the enemy leader jumped after her, sure that he was about to die. Sputtering, more with fear than with water, he was surprised to find he could swim.

He realized that merely being a captive of these strange people gave him undreamed-of powers! Huskier even than Pat, he scrambled ashore and threw his lieutenants into the lake. After they learned that no harm came to them, they made a game of it. It was good fun throwing frightened beings into the water! Brent noticed that example had a greater effect on these people than on his own. They were ashamed not to do what others did.

While the captives bathed, Pat secretly explained his appearance to Brent. Going with little Gus on the day before the attack, he had found a huge light, like a flashlight only very much larger, in a tremendous cave. It was on wheels, and little Gus had found how to operate it. You simply pushed its one tooth. You could make it shine where you wanted from behind. He had learned it was hot and exhibited a bad burn in proof. Then he found that it had eyelids. When they were raised, the light still shone, but it was dimmer and no heat came forth.

It had taken them some time to learn how to operate the thing, and it was dark when they started pushing it home. He had found the swords and the banner and the boot he wore strapped on his head in the same cave. Ever fearful that the captured sunlight would go out, he had not let it shine.

As they neared home, he heard sounds of battle. At first, he had wanted to run back to the defense of his clan, but had seen the size of the enemy and realized the uselessness of regular fighting. Hitt suggested burning them with the light. They had not thought of the mysterious scare it would give until they saw the enemy cringe in fear.

As they pushed the light nearer, they threw on the power. It was so bright that it blinded every one temporarily. Hitt ran into the building, found the man who could make the many-armed animal scream, and had taken him to the roof. Fear of the mysterious noises and sun had won the fight. Afraid that the enemy might revolt, Pat had not dared show his discovery to the clan. His huskies had been sworn to secrecy on pain of death. Just before daybreak the light had been pushed back where they found it.

Pat looked at the huskiness of the captives. Now they wanted to be part of the clan. But some day there would be trouble. He saw the men looking with interest on his own clan's women. Then he noted his own men looking with equal desire on the captive women. There would be much trouble. And soon.

Eee came forward at that. She had named the captive leader "Ug"—his one verbal expression—and was secretly in love with him. If he was to remain a slave, she feared Brent would not let her go to him. She put forward a thought. Let there be exchanges of unattached women among the leaders of both clans; let the leaders be free men instead of slaves. This would make for peace as the men and women mixed.

Brent and his council thought the idea good. They wondered if the woman the leader would draw would tame him. Eee, with dramatic effect, offered to sacrific herself for the sake of the clan.

The changing of women took place. There was little discord, the freed captive leaders keeping order in their own ranks. Brent's clan enjoyed the superiority of being able to teach their new mates.

Little Gus Shueller felt that his manhood was being slighted. He would have been content with any prize, but the enemy had no prizes to offer except women and slaves, and slaves, he had noticed, were a nuisance. A master always had to be on hand to work them, and they ate up good food. Also, they continually plotted in small ways against their masters. That left a woman as his only rightful reward for victory, and he presented his claim.

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The council heard him with amusement. It was hard to know just what to do. There was no overabundance of women and Little Gus was small. However, he had shown both brains and courage, and had in large part been responsible for their survival.

On occasion, Little Gus had been seen watching some of the prettier women, with boyish speculation in his eyes. Now the members of the council made guesses as to which woman he would want. It would be a beauty, and probably one desired by some stalwart warrior. Discussing this in their clumsy fashion, they grew heated of opinion and placed bets. This was the first gambling of the new world.

Brent finally announced that Little Gus would be allotted the woman of his choice, providing she did not already have her own man. Little Gus wandered through the enemy ranks looking the women over with a boy's canny eye. He looked at one who was passing the time fashioning a bag out of strips of material and string. He thought seriously of her; she could use her fingers. He considered a plump one with laughter in her eyes.

Any woman who could remain plump and good natured under the rigors of that civilization had a lot of smartness. He thought of another who had many furs and much jewelry. Those, of course, would become her man's property, but he was not figuring the value of the wealth. What he was figuring was this woman's instinct for accumulation, and noting scars upon her that showed she would protect it. That was much in her favor, but he did not like her vanity.

The women knew, of course, what was happening and were grunting and making noises at him and making this a joke. They understood that he was some favored son and he might make a good catch. Being older, they would know how to get the most favor out of a boy.

Little Gus was flattered, but he was holding a hard head. If he just wanted to bump noses or get his back scrubbed, he could borrow a woman any time. What he wanted was a woman to advance his manhood. He was torn between the one who could use her hands so ably and the plump laughing one. Just then, something walloped him in the eye.

It was a wet rag, and blinking, he detected a homely gangling girl his own age grimacing at him and sticking out her tongue. This was an outrage upon his warrior status and he should not have even noticed. But he was roiled and forgot his dignity. He took out after her on the run.

She darted out of the crowd and around the block and gave him a tough chase through the wreckage of a fallen building. She was light as a cat upon her feet with amazing endurance. He caught her only because she got marooned atop a wall from which there was no way down.

He took her back down and beat her head against the ground. Sobbing, she made him understand what her father would do to him and that her father was Ug. He beat her some more to show his contempt, but this knowledge was percolating in his head. A leader was a leader and therefore a power, even a vanquished one. Beside which, this homely little spitfire would be able to run beside him on exciting explorations, and of his own age, was more fun. He felt that instinctively. The only other young person he had even known was Peter Ship.

He got up and dragged her to her feet and regarded her with his fiercest scowl. Then he took her by the hair and dragged her back. Ug scowled as he saw the signs that his daughter had been beaten, but Little Gus marched arrogantly past him and threw the girl down in front of Brent. He stood trying to look imposing, and pointed down at her as his choice.

Ug suddenly lifted up a great guttural laugh. He was proud of what was his. Little Gus' selection out of many more pretty and useful women did his heart good. Brent seemed to have made this boy his own son. That made everything better.

The girl, Hum, who drew musical chords out of the animal with the black and white teeth, and who hummed music to herself so much, moved through the crowd of captives eyeing and sniffing at the men. Why, she did not know. She was drawn to do this by that vague yet soul-deep instinct that sooner or later she would find a certain man. She had no memory of Goddard, of course. It was just that she knew emotions in her which had never responded to any man she saw.

Twice, she stopped, felt of men's arms and searched for something in their eyes. She saw answering lights of puzzled interest, but the feelings she hoped for did not arise. Wearily, she went back and shook her head at Brent. She would not willingly take any of these men. Brent granted her protection as he would a daughter. Sometimes, he had a strange feeling that maybe she was his daughter. It certainly seemed as if he had known her before the first time they met.

BRENT spent much time in thought and sign language talk with his council that summer. Drik's unreliability and laziness had gotten him into fresh trouble and he had just saved himself by a brain storm which gave every thinker a lot of fresh work. He had suggested that they break the captives up and

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put groups of them to live with old clan members. The plan worked well, each older clansman becoming something of a pedagogue. It was of great annoyance to some of the more pompous that Drik's particular charges learned faster, and began to produce useful ideas from the start. To make it worse, they liked him. He seldom had to lay on the rod.

There was much interest as the captives illustrated their history in sign language. A strange exciting history it was to Brent's people, none too clearly told, nor agreed upon, but presenting a picture of the enormous discoveries and life yet to be seen by the clan. Brent found much confusion, due to fabrications of the story-tellers. But most was due to the backward mentality of the clan. There was little sense of time or continuity in their minds.

All remembered suddenly finding themselves terrified by the catastrophe about them. For that period, their experiences were similar to those of Brent's tribe. They had lived and worked in industrial sections, far to the north of Brent. When intelligence had been reborn, they had found their number to be about five thousand; Ug was their leader. They roamed about, living in strange caves, eating whatever they found. Luckily, during the first winter they had discovered many four-legged things and killed them for food. Once the four-legged things had been known as horses. They had not known the use of knives, and had ripped things with their teeth and hands.

The winter they had spent in a cold place that once had been a large riding academy. The four-legged things were all eaten, finally, and they had had to move on through bitter cold, terrifying white dirt, and water that was hard and had to be sucked instead of drunk. They had fire, for they had found it burning and carried it in a bathtub they had found. They picked up clubs and fought strange clans as they went along. Many of the dead they ate. Some they captured. But their own ranks died off swiftly. They did not eat the bodies that died, instinctively fearful.

Just before they had come far south to the Park, they had fought a large clan, larger than Brent's, and forced it to flee. They had come across hard water. On their way they had seen many things. But food and clothing, the two requisites of life, were scarce. They could not burden themselves carrying other less-useful treasure. Once there had been revolt, and Ug had had to fight to the death the strongest man in the tribe. They had tumbled into a fire, and Ug had lain across a burning log, which gave him the scar across his chest. But he had won the fight with a firebrand by poking out the other's eyes.

Like little children, the captives now turned to learning the things their captors knew. Sometimes there were cublike fights of ill temper, quickly quelled by orders from Pat and Ug. Ug liked bathing and became the champion of Smith's fundamental rule. He liked Pat and gave him fifty of his huskiest and most trustworthy men to enforce order. He liked Eee and spent much time learning the things she taught him, such as how to break open cans and find food, to use knives, to shut and open doors.

Eee determined to hold Ug against all outsiders. She did so simply by making herself the most attractive of any of the tribe. Once, her monopoly was threatened by Mrs. Cosgrave. Ug was on the verge of succumbing when the woman heard her triplets wailing and flew to their protection. Long after, she carried a suspicious glint in her eyes when Eee was in sight. Perhaps she suspected that Eee had pinched the little one to make him howl at just that moment.

Brent and his clan banded in an instinctive fight against time, a fight to absorb the captives and make them part of the clan before they rebelled. Quarters were crowded, but Brent feared to let the captives live alone until they showed signs of loyalty. Nobody had ever thought to investigate, but Brent imagined there were many caves in other surrounding rocks that had chimneys. They needed chimneys for their crude living.

Just at this time, Hitt discovered an illustrated chart of army organization in the secret cave where the sun was hidden. Brent pondered over the diagram, tried to pick the pictures of soldiers off the paper. They would not come away. Pictures would never come away, and that puzzled him. He could understand the chart, because it had pictures of men in groups—odd-looking individuals, but still recognizable.

Late in the summer he solved the mystery and organized his own clan similarly. It had squads and platoons and companies. Each chief was responsible to the one above him. Many troublemakers who were made chiefs took their new responsibility very seriously. Order came out of chaos. Brent and Pat felt relief. Ug invited them to his fire for food for the first time. As an afterthought, he invited Ryan, Smith, and Hitt.

The immaculate Mr. Smith had felt his importance diminishing. To the captives he was not the being who had accomplished the mysterious miracle of The Mighty Belch and Magnificent Bubbles. Nor could he duplicate the performance. He did not know how it had happened. He was simply the annoying being whose orders were enforced by Pat's huskies.

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This was an intolerable situation, driving him to a far, lone expedition, seeking magic. He found it in the form of a queer animal, even queerer than Scappella's, that had hands on its face. It startled the captives into obeying him and admitting that the little man, too, had great powers. Strange birds came forth and sang at his command. To the captives, the mysterious phenomenon was akin to Pat's commanding the sun; the giant bat that made hideous noises in their midst. Cleanliness was thereby reestablished as a religion. Smith was the high priest. The fact was witnessed by his powers over the Sacred Cuckoo Clock.

Great were the powers of their captors!

There was one day of breathless excitement. Pat found a strange beast which shone and had colored teeth and arms. Its eyes glittered. Its legs were round, like the legs of the carts. It would not have been recognized as an animal except for its smell. It was found in a stable. It moved when pushed. It had the rich smell of leather from its rotting leather seat cover.

Pat had it pushed before the house. As a special treat, he seated his son on the beast's back. As he leaned over, his elbow touched one of its teeth, and it made a frightened noise. He jumped back instinctively, his arm hitting something else as he did so. The beast growled and started forward. Consternation came over the clan. It was running away with Pat's baby!

Theft! Stealing his child! Death to the rogue!

Seizing an ax, Pat began a running attack upon the thing. It disregarded him and ran faster. Once it lurched, throwing his baby into the air. Pat caught it, handed it to somebody, continued his fight. He hit the monster in the eyes. But it was undefeatable. At last, he hit it in the teeth. There was a blinding blue flash. The clan saw Pat lifted and thrown by some invisible force. Long hours after, very shaky from electric shock, he was told of how he had killed the beast in a desperate fight and how the beast had thrown blue flame at him. Once, it had been an electric street roller.

For the first time, the clan began to think. Its leaders had done all thinking until now: the clan had done what was shown it. Now, it began to wonder *why* things were done. One of the slowest-witted of the captives discovered how to use a can opener. This put the entire clan to shame. It inaugurated a wave of discovery and study more intense than any before.

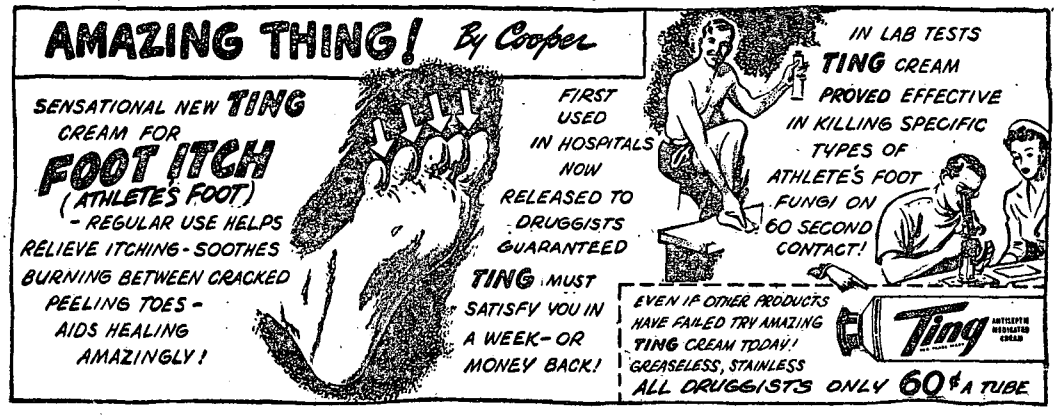
Smith, determined to strengthen his importance, spent days of exploration. At last he made a discovery. With glee, he had a long, heavy iron stick carried to the park, while he brought a large box of colored pieces of strange animal flesh. Putting the flesh to the end of the stick, he twisted its arms. The flesh filled out into a large bubble. One grew many times larger than the rest, larger than Smith himself. He was holding it against the stick and it was growing and growing when suddenly it tore loose and carried him high up into the air. Jabbering and shouting, hanging on with instinctive fear, his petticoats flying from about his neck, he was carried away and deposited on top of a house—a veritable bird!

He was the new world's first balloonist. Yet he had not learned that the gas burned!

His powers and daring now fully realized by the entire clan, many gathered in front of the house to gaze up at him in awe. Toward sundown, they saw him waving frantically over the edge of the roof, and they all waved back respectfully.

Three days later, Brent sent Pat to find out why Smith was wasting time on top of the strange building. Pat found the little man unconscious from thirst. He had been unable to break through the roof door and gain freedom.

Oddly, there was little exploration. Intensely alert mentally, the clan became physically inactive. Wood for fires was near at hand. With one discovery of a large stock of canned meat, the clan had ample food. Water was in the park. Sand was used to clean cooking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plates, and that was near at hand. It was warm and little clothing was needed. No strange clans appeared to disrupt the pleasant life. Occasional small tribes were captured.

Hirsch found a series of children's primers and was engrossed in the study of reading the dead bugs. Already, he knew Pat's animal was a DOG and that they cooked in PANS. He could pronounce the same words from hearing them on the phonograph, but the connection between speaking and printing he had not solved.

His argument with Professor Hitt as to whether skirts should be worn about neck or waist grew to become a heated clan division. Each had a large following. Hirsch produced illustrations of skirts worn about waists. Hitt came back at him with photos of clerics with skirts hanging from necks and of men in capes and plaids.

Little Gus Shueller, off on one of his perennial scouting trips with his wife, discovered a store full of clothes. Long ago, its automatic shutters had clanged shut as the city shivered and lost its memory. The humans inside had starved to death. Nobody outside had been able to gain entrance. Little Gus, with daring, went in through the coal chute.

For the first time, the entire clan was clothed. Drik found many top hats, which he hoarded. His old one was little more than a rim. Hitt found two fur-lined foot-warmers, and staggered about wearing one upon each foot, kept on by a string running about his neck. Ryan and Mrs. Ship's man took a fancy to silk and lace underthings, which they wore over other clothes. Scappella invented cradles out of corsets. Thomas Furrell laid aside a supply of fur muffs, which he wore over arms and legs at night. Socks were worn for shoes as long as they lasted. Ug grew disgusted with clothes when he captured his foot in a riding boot and it refused to let go. Brent laid claim to all bath robes.

Cleanliness was reestablished with new clothes. Old ones discarded were burned with the garbage. Trousers and skirts were worn indiscriminately by both sexes. Sherman made his first contribution, excepting his good nature and man power, to the clan. He discovered the use of scissors and safety razors. By order of Brent, the entire clan had the hair of their heads clipped short and all bodies shaven. Much vermin passed over the Great Divide.

The one ever-present fear—that the fires would go out—became a reality. A heavy rain put out the fire in the park. Only one fire was kept in the house these warm days, and the same night its keeper fell asleep and it died. Cold food, no heat when needed, damp houses, no light at night—fell tragedy lay in store!

An expedition to search for fire was being considered when little Gus appeared, waving a burning paper in his hands. One of the professors had left a magnifying glass on a window ledge. The sun rays had concentrated, brought flame.

The sun was no longer so warm nor out so long. Brent had an instinctive premonition of winter. But he did not realize why he suddenly became very active. The mayor discovered hammers, nails and saws, and established their uses. Heavy planks were found and placed firmly in the windows of the first, second, and third floors. Windows above that level were half boarded, allowing air, but keeping out much rain. Apartments had gathered great filth from the number of inhabitants. They were given another thorough cleaning. Apartment houses next door to Brent's were laid claim to. Most stank with rotted corpses and damp rot. Cleaned, the clan spread out into more spacious quarters.

A larger family of cats came as a godsend. They were sent to the storerooms along with Peter Ship's cat to keep out rats. On top of one apartment house there was a large cave, nearly as large as Brent's, with a lake in it. Ug took this for himself. At first, he used the water for swimming, drinking, and washing. After a time, he found it was not good to drink. There was also an animal like Hum's, but much prettier and with a nicer sound, and another animal, very much like it, but with more teeth. When kicked, this one had a deep voice. Hum liked the organ and moved in with Ug.

Eee considered the long walk to their cave and the problem of wood. She decided a supply should be on hand, and Ug so ordered it. Drik suggested pulling it up by rope. Scappella found the use of pulleys.

Civilization was being reborn.

Chapter Two

FIREWATER AND BOOKS

WINTER came upon the clan without warning. Out in the Atlantic, the Gulf Stream suddenly switched its course far to the east. A southerly current, ice cold and carrying huge icebergs down the Atlantic coast, swept in between the warm southern current and the shores. One day was fairly warm. The night was cold, but the following morning warm. In the afternoon dark clouds raced across the sky. A bitter, desolate wind swept down, blanketing the city in a white, dazzling mantle of death. The blizzard lasted for days.

Brent saw the white dirt; saw later that the

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water had turned hard and cold again. He feared greatly for his clan. A small expedition on its way home with food was lost in the snow, frozen to death. Landscape and landmarks changed in a twinkling. Pat, a few blocks from the house, had difficulty finding his way back. Ug, before he could get back across the park, had a foot frostbitten. One of Mrs. Cosgrave's triplets, playing near the window, was covered with drifting snow and died of cold. Hitt, exploring in the cave where the sun was hidden, found his way back only by following one of the pups of Pat's dog which had accompanied him. Haw, arriving late from downtown, had no difficulty finding his way, but his arm was pierced by a falling icicle. The mayor and Scappella were wanted everywhere to fix windows and block them from the storm.

Winter was hardest on the outside workers. Few had even the remains of shoes. Rags about the feet were tried, but they froze and chafed and had to be discarded. Feet were cut and frozen. Gangrene and blood poisoning laid low many of the best men. Wood grew harder to find. It had to be dried before it would burn. Often, logs and planks bearing twice their weight in ice had to be brought home. Sometimes, after long, dreary marches, shoulders aching from the weight of loads, wood turned out to be iron or material that would not burn.

The clan crowded closer together, families doubling up for warmth and comforting nearness. Houses were cold, even with huge fires burning. Pneumonia laid its devastating grip upon the clan, giving birth to misery and fear. Two roving bands of savages were reported, and an entire brick yard was transported to the roof of the house for ammunition. There were daily accidents as workers fell through crusted ice and snow into hidden holes, some never to reappear. Sickness and disease increased their toll; an apartment was set apart for the sick. It was chill and most of them died anyway. At night there was the hair-raising cry of scavenger packs.

The clan grew bitter and morose. Men became surly. For the first time there was widespread jealousy of women and fights over trivial affairs. Women now represented about all the wealth and happiness there was.

Food began to run out. Starvation faced the clan, and even with strictest rationing the supply ran lower. Eee found that the dark-brown stones with the pleasant smell could be cooked in water. They were too bitter to eat, but the water was good. It brought warmth. When the stones were cracked or mashed, it was even better. Coffee saved the clan.

Clothing and blankets barely went around, and when large expeditions after food went forth they needed all the covering they could get. One of Pat's huskies froze to death while carrying part of a large log. Another stuck solidly to a steel girder. He died while his comrades looked on. Every expedition left a trail of blood behind it. Hungry, one of the captives killed a cat and ate it. Cats were needed to protect food from rats. The iron discipline of necessity was enforced. The man was killed, his body thrown to the street.

The scavenger dogs did not eat that body. There were signs that he had been cut to pieces with knives. Cannibal clans were roaming.

The beautiful girl, Hum, and little Gus did more to hold the strained emotions of the clan in check than anything else through that long, cold winter. Nightly, the clan gathered about the big fire in the great hall of Brent's cave. There Hum gave moments of cutting pathos and joy. Her animal made sounds striking taut cords in the human breast, quelling spirits of revolt and battle, giving the savage nature its first realization of something lurking deep within itself, something which said: "Wait, hold yourself, do not kill your friend or steal his food." Little Gus sang songs in the many languages he had learned from Scappella's animal. His voice was clear and mellow, and his martial music gave despondent beings new spirit and the will to go on.

Hum was regarded with eager eyes, her ability to drive away fear raising her importance in this bleak, cold, white world. Three times Ug, and twice Pat had to answer her shrieks for help as she was being carried off by some admirer.

Ug himself was in love with her and one evening took her into his arms, his blood pounding hotly against his temples. She did not fight as she had with other men. Yet some finer instinct in Ug made him think better of his act. He looked at Hum, saw her look back, puzzled, then shake her head. Slowly, he put her down.

The urgent need for food and wood led the clan to explore surrounding buildings. Now that he thought of it, Brent was surprised that they had not investigated them more thoroughly before. Most of the caves they found stank with mold, damp, and rot. There were many skeletons. Evil-looking rats glared at the intruders as they broke in. One of the men caught a rat. It bit him, and the next day he turned blue, died shrieking.

Peter Ship discovered little spots of color and tubes of other colors. They smelt good, but did not taste well. But he found that the colors came away and made marks. There

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were little sticks that made marks, too, and other sticks that had hair growing on their shining heads. And books of funny-looking men which he tried to pick off the pages; but they would not come.

He found how to use the paints and paint brushes. Together with Thomas Furrell, he made sketches and painted in the outlines of the men in the books. The sketches seemed funny to the clan, too. Particularly the one that looked like Pat. Beneath it were little bugs making the line O G R E. In future years he was to spell his name with those bugs.

There were also a great many bottles of brown water. One had a twisted knife in the cork. Scappella learned its use and sampled the contents of the bottle. It burned his throat, but gave him a pleasant sensation. It made him warm. He took the bottles to Brent, who tried them. Eventually, the entire clan was drinking. Drik alone stopped after the first drink. He did not like the taste of whisky.

The clan had its first drunk.

Everybody except Drik got plastered. Husky slaves forgot their fear under the stimulus of liquor. There was fighting on every hand. Pat, valiantly protecting his woman at the cost of five broken heads, went down with a broken jaw himself. There was confusion and civil war. Animal instincts and hate held sway. Released emotions sprang forth, the long strain of the cruel winter snapping like an icicle.

Little Gus Shueller pulled the limp form of Eee into a closet and hid her. She had passed out. Mrs. Cosgrave attached herself with drunken voluptuousness to one of the slaves. Eventually she decided she did not like his rough ways and stabbed him with a knife that came to hand.

Drik watched the orgy grow in heat. He was astounded by the effect the liquor had on them. Brent alone seemed to have control of himself. He had not guzzled so heavily as the rest. Drik found himself disgusted by the sight. It occurred to him that a continuation of such events would lead to the destruction of the clan.

Hitt had gained strength but was still no match for husky brutes. He was fighting with two slaves over his woman. She stood quietly by, apparently pleased to see beings fighting over her. Drik broke a bottle over the head of one of Hitt's antagonists. Little Gus, returning from his mission, staggered slightly. He saw Drik hit a man with a bottle. He liked Drik. Also, he liked the idea of hitting people with bottles.

Picking up bottles as he went, he sneaked up behind fighting groups and duplicated the gesture. Men sank quietly to the floor. Drik continued his warfare. He saw his own woman being carried away and outdid himself to hit her captors. One he killed. The other carried a raw scar across his forehead for life. Ug battled gloriously with anybody. The floor about him was strewn with blood and bodies. He was having a marvelous time.

The women looked on, pleased with the excitement. Here was primeval right of possession carried to the death!

Suddenly, in the flare of firelight, Ug saw two leering savages leading Hum away. She reeled drunkenly. He forgot the good time he was having. His head cleared of the pleasant fog. With a growl of savage rage, he leaped upon the two, dragging them to the floor, biting one's throat until it gushed warm, red blood, gouging out the other's eyes. Looking about, he saw a brute, larger than himself, attacking Brent. With a single movement, Ug hurled the attacker through a window.

Quickly now he gathered the leaders in a group. Some were so drunk it took hard slaps to sober them. Ug slapped them instinctively, made signs that they must end the orgy. A mere handful, they faced the snarling packs of lower tribesmen. The fire cast ominous shadows on the walls.

Mr. Smith, looking immaculate amidst the bloody throng, appeared with swords, daggers, and his cuckoo clock. He was very tight and quite unperturbed about the struggle. Ug passed out the weapons. The leaders, quicker and cleverer, managed them well. For a few moments, the stronger slaves resisted. Many got swords themselves. But they used them clumsily. Suddenly, several turned and fled. The rest wavered, followed. The fight was over.

AS PUNISHMENT, the slaves were made to spend the night outside the buildings. They crowded into other caves, but they were damp and cold. Four died from exposure. The rest were thoroughly chastised. For good measure, all women were publicly whipped next morning. Morality had been established.

All men had displayed valor and could be proud of their actions. They were. Mr. Smith now considered himself on a par with Pat. He had killed one man and hit down many. Drik was regarded as good for something besides ideas for the first time. Professor Hitt strutted before the women. In spite of the cold, he went without chest covering so as to exhibit his none-too-full biceps.

He caught cold and nearly died as a result. The entire clan spent a week recuperating

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from bruises and sickness from the liquor. A slave was found attempting to hide a dirk. He was promptly executed by the now-quite-ferocious Professor Hitt. His body was thrown to the packs of wild dogs along with those killed in the fight.

Brent's first thought, after the affray, had been to throw away the remaining liquor. But it proved to have value. Several colds had been cured. The liquor was locked up and its use prohibited except with Brent's permission. Drik suggested confiscation of anybody's wife who was found drinking. This was a fearful penalty. The women suddenly become very righteous and far more careful not to be caught in occasional wanderings down the primrose path.

The rest of the winter was of intense privation. There were skirmishes with roving bands. Women were taken captive if desirable.

Eee discovered the comforts of a warm bath in a tub. Snow was melted and heated over the fire. Smith discovered rings of dirt in a tub and enforced a tub-cleaning law. Peter Ship became Silas Brent's page boy, gradually acquiring the art of thought and introspection from the patriarch. He could draw and paint quite well now. Well enough, in fact, to write messages in hieroglyphics.

Little Gus, scouting around the outskirts of a food-hunting party, discovered a marvelous cave. Like the one where he had found the clothes, it was shielded from entrance by iron shutters. The wind had blown snow clear of the sidewalk beside it, and he gained entrance through the coal chute. Inside was a wealth of unknown objects. Little Gus discovered the use of a sled by tripping upon it. The use of skis, snowshoes, and toboggans followed. There were warm clothes and knives. There were pieces of steel and wood with holes in the steel. But nobody could solve that mystery. Part of the clan moved into the building to protect it against marauders, as its full stock could not be carried away. One of the lower-floor shutters was knocked out to give entrance and exit.

The discovery of the sleds was of immense significance, a means of transportation through heavy snow. Later, one of the professors was dispatched with a magnifying glass to build a fire for the defenders of the store. In looking for a place to build it, he discovered the furnace. The fire blew up the almost empty boiler, terrifying the party. But research was now the first law of the clan. Within the year, the professor had discovered the use of a furnace and the difference between hot-air and steam-heat systems. It cost him one arm.

The store contained portable phonographs and records. Brent distributed them among the most intelligent. In the queer boxes that talked and sang, he felt a great mystery would be solved. Bows and arrows were also found. Experimenting from pictures he had seen in books, Drik shot Ug in the seat, to the vast amusement of the clan.

The tribe was dying off from unknown diseases, colds, stomach troubles, and warfare. Food grew harder and harder to find. Poisons killed many. Mustard and water was found to make people vomit and was kept constantly on hand. The importance of labels on boxes, cans, and bottles became more evident. There were spasmodic discoveries of liquor, and trouble resulted. A rule against drinking the contents of any bottle was established. Fights within the clan were definitely prohibited, except fist fights before the assembled tribe. This measure was forced by the size of other tribes seen about. Manpower was valuable.

There was a find of flour and oatmeal. Mixed with water, the paste was cooked and became one of the main foods. A large quantity of corn was also found. Meat disappeared from the diet.

Pat discovered numbers of emaciated people living in the city library. They had small fires in the center of the floor and burned books and wood. Luckily, most of the books they had burned were fiction. He captured the groups, put some to death because of illness, took others to the house which had now become the citadel. Brent himself went to investigate the building where there were so many books.

Long, that day, he sat in contemplation of the queer objects with little bugs all over their insides. There must be some reason for so many. He decided books should be left unharmed. Sherman was installed in the library with a substantial guard to see that there was no further vandalism. With him went two of the professors to make a study of the mystery and attempt to unravel it.

* * *

As suddenly as it had arrived, winter vanished. Bringing freshness and hope and joy of living, spring bathed the tired souls and sore bodies of Brent's clan. Teaching brains to coordinate again had not been accomplished without a drain on the spirit. Like a schoolboy after cramming for exams, the tribe felt dazed and mentally stuffy. Vermin, colds, disease, bad diet, privation, poisoning, the ravages of a hard winter had taken toll. Even with the captured and children, the clan numbered a bare two thousand.

Brent, accompanied by his council, made a tour of his caves and checked his possessions. His people were sick, inside and out. Their

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eyes had become dull and lusterless, their minds slept, their bodies were covered with sores, and their muscles sagged from malnutrition. Colds, rheumatism, stomach and mouth ills, dirt, and vermin held them in a mental and physical inertia from which they would spring with abrupt madness from time to time —then sink back into protective thoughtlessness. Clothes and covering were practically gone. Food, except for the brown stones that were boiled, and some oatmeal, had run out.

Brent could now calculate in multiples of ten. He had ten fingers and ten toes. He called the clan into the park, reorganizing it in tens. Ten people had one leader. The leader was chosen for his brains and ability to maintain order. There were ten of these groups, and they had one leader. Then there were ten of these, and they had a leader. There were three of the larger groups, Pat heading one, Ug another, Hitt a third. Each leader was given a name in hieroglyphics. Peter Ship and Thomas Furrell drew them in duplicate so that leaders had one slip by which to know themselves when messages came. There was the council that numbered all the outstanding brains, and beneath that a regular meeting of all leaders established so that complaints and requests could be made.

Brent had worked out the idea of time. Winter, he had seen, was a regular occurrence. There was day and night; there were four seasons. Roughly, he knew the length of days and of seasons. Smith wanted an immediate spring cleaning. Brent considered the matter. Food was scarce, and the people basked in the sun. He decided that they needed a celebration first. Yet the caves were unhealthily filthy, his instinct told him.

In four large parties, the clan set forth to find food. They found many cans, but some turned out to be colored stuff, like Peter and Furrell used to make marks. They found much evidence that other large clans had been before them. They dared not venture too far from their citadel.

Enough food was found, however, and for a week the clan played about fires in the park. Brent learned that there was wood and material in near-by houses, and ordered all furniture in their own houses burned for fires. This cleaned the caves of much vermin and disease.

Day and night, fires burned brightly, and the spring festival brought joy. Babies arrived. Men exchanged women and goods. The first games were held. Fighting for the sheer joy of combat, wrestling, throwing heavy rocks and logs, races, took place.

Ug challenged Ryan. Not for a bet, but for glory. Ten times he threw him. Warriors, seeing how badly Ryan was defeated, expected him to be mad. Instead, he smiled at the end of the combat, shared a bit of pickled tongue with Ug. Sportsmanship had appeared. The difference between games and savage warfare was distinguished.

Hum had one of her animals brought to the park and played much music. Little Gus sang; others began to learn words and how to hum tunes. Two drums were discovered, and Gus quickly learned to play them, learned, too, that they sounded better when left beside the fire for a time.

Brent noticed drum sound could stir the clan's mood.

At the end of the week, Brent called a halt to play. There was work to be done. The clan was healthier again. It must find more food, a great deal more, so that they would not go hungry again. A large supply of wood must be found. The large roving tribes must be traced and captured if possible. Otherwise they might attack small bands when off on work and expeditions.

Smith had first say on routine. All apartments were completely emptied and cleaned from floor to ceiling. Ladders were discovered and used. Barrels were found and placed upon carts, used to carry water for cleaning. Worn-out clothing supplied rags. Pat's huskies saw that work was done. Then came the day of the spring bath.

Ug swam clear across the lake. Bathing became a game and an accomplishment. Sherman gave instruction in the use of scissors and razors. The clan shaved. Pat's woman discovered that salt placed upon sores after bathing hurt, but healed sores. The women were made to wash all cloth from clothes to rugs. They rubbed with rocks, and the things were fresher and better afterward. The furs, however, suffered.

Ug got the idea of cleaning knives and swords the same way. All weapons were brought forth and rubbed until they glittered. It was found that smooth rocks made the swords sharper, but rough rocks spoiled their edges. After the cleaning, the clan felt healthier and better. Only two people were drowned, and they had been sick anyway.

Then began the exciting month of expeditions. All discoveries were brought before Brent. Food, wood, clothing, knives, and swords belonged to the clan as a whole. Brent, Pat, Ug, Ryan, Hitt, and the council took whatever they wanted. The rest of the treasure was then divided by the chief of the expedition and could be traded. Theft and the withholding of treasure was punished im-

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mediately with death. In three days, Pat killed seven men. The crime wave ended.

A custom was established. When booty was being divided, first choice went to the finders. But second choice, instead of going to the fighters, now went to workers utilizing those items.

MUCH treasure was found near at hand. Eventually, Scappella and the mayor came into possession of most mechanical and building devices. There was the exciting discovery of jewelry. Immediately it had great value, although diamonds and rubies were often worth less than glass spangles. Brent brought forth his bag of precious rings and gave them as rewards. Mrs. Cosgrave found a gigantic chandelier of cut crystal and had a terrific time with it, for she wore it around her neck. Small supplies of food were found. Wood was brought before the citadel and piled across the street. A Louis IV bedroom suite burned brightly.

Little Gus and Peter Ship gave an exciting account of great caves underground, but no treasure or usefuls could be found in them. Clothing was abundant. There was a dearth of shoes . . . signs showing that more savage tribes had hunted them down to answer their savage hunger. Many of the things that spat sunshine were discovered, one of them in the hand of a skeleton, who, when killed, had been inserting a battery. Batteries, it was found, made sunshine come forth when it had ceased. Great supplies of knives and axes and cooking pots were discovered . . . and the find of the great red carts that would carry much and could be pulled by fifteen men.

These had been department store trucks and one of them suddenly barked at its discoverers. It had been knocked in gear and started jerkily forward, attacking a man who was in the way. It stalled in two blocks and a guard was set around it for several days in case it tried to evade slavery again.

The trucks fascinated Scappella. There were many things that had a machine smell, and he was sure there was some unfathomed mystery to bring them to life. Like others, he still thought in very simple terms. Anything which made a noise and had movement of its own was some kind of animal, like himself. But some animals, such as Smith's cuckoo clock, could be made to work at will. Others could not. There was a puzzle here.

Travel and expedition now extended all the way downtown to the library. Fifth Avenue was the regular route. Exploration parties seldom went more than two blocks to the east or west of the thoroughfare.

Brent had great curiosity about one large cave. It was the Metropolitan Museum. He investigated. Luckily, he had a large force with him, for as they entered one room they were attacked by strange beings from the opposite wall. Ferociously, his men fell upon the life-sized portrait and ripped it to pieces. The place was in disorder, but little damage had been done to paintings. Haw came running to Brent in amazement. He had seen him in another room! But when he touched him, he did not move. Also, Brent was in this room, so how could he be in the other room at the same time?

Brent investigated and found that Haw spoke the truth. There he was, high up on the side of the cave, looking very much as he looked in mirrors, except that he was clothed differently and had no beard. He had himself lifted down and looked long and felt every part of this, his other self.

It was astounding!

He had himself taken home and established a guard at the museum. There was evidently nothing to be feared from the strangers on the walls. Some of them were only half there. Even the ones who were bigger than they were did not come out of their surroundings and fight. There was much of interest in this cave, and it became the entertainment center for the clan. Brent found that they could not work steadily without wearing out, and established every tenth day as a day free from work. On these days many of the clan went to the museum, learning much from the flat dead beings on the walls.

With two outposts both in the same direction and expeditions progressing along what had once been Fifth Avenue, it became necessary to clear the street so that carts could be moved without interruption. This took an entire week of the whole clan's time. Great was the wonder as piles of wreckage exposed skeletons and treasure such as jewels and many truckloads of useful goods.

Now, with a clear lane for transportation, exploration went forward much faster. There were innumerable discoveries of clothing and furniture and things not understood. There was the game store which gave forth such delights as monkeys on a stick, small furry animals that could not be eaten but thrilled the children, and bagatelle, which was to become the national game. So much treasure was found that there was not enough men to transport it, and part of the clan was sent on an expedition to find more slaves.

Thomas Furrell thought of mapping the part of the city they knew. Sherman discovered that the map looked like part of a large one he was studying at the library. The most

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intelligent of the clan were shown the two maps and sent forth on a scouting party. They came back with evidence which led Brent to conclude that Sherman had the map of the universe. It was a street map of Manhattan.

It grew very hot and still only scanty supplies of food were found. Brent remembered that it had been hot once before and then turned cold and they could not go far from their place of caves. He worried about supplies of food for the coming winter. They had captured several hundred slaves, but mostly, they were still suffering from starvation and ate more than the others. It took weeks of feeding them to make them useful. He knew that there was water on each side of the land and that there were large caves down by the water. Maybe, he thought, food would be found there.

Explorations were sent out to locate food. There was plenty of everything else for the time. More drums were found and used as signals between the outposts and the citadel. They became the form of long distance communication.

On a very hot day in mid summer, Brent lounged in the shade of a tarpaulin beside the lake in the park. He was thinking, which was still a hard physical chore, a business of as yet undisciplined and untaught minds struggling for discipline. He had thought of another severe winter and, for the first time, itemized the needs of the clan in order of importance. This was the first act of ordered planning. It made him conscious of the disorder of the clan's existence.

It occurred to him that for many months, parties had either climbed over obstacles along Fifth Avenue or wandered blocks around. It had taken much extra time and labor in bringing treasure back. Now that the avenue was clear, they used a straight line of communication and half the people accomplished twice as much.

It was necessary, then, to find the shortest routes between important points and clear those. It was also necessary to assure themselves of wood, water, food and covering for winter. There were other needs, but those were essential. With that in mind he called a council of his mappers, explorers and battle captains. In this council, Little Gus and Peter Ship held equal place with older men. So did Eee who had evidenced a talent for finding stores, and who worked with Drik making ideas, such as storage tanks for water, practical.

The meeting lasted for three days. Speech was still uncertain and vague. Sign language was merely helpful. But sketches, both in the dirt and upon paper, made meanings clear to all. Out of this meeting came an important plan. Brent defined an immediate clan territory in the general shape of a circle. Within the circle were known areas of wood, water, and needed containers such as tanks, and places not yet fully explored which might offer food and covering. He drew eight lines straight across the circle. These lines were to be avenues of thoroughfares. The full clan manpower was to be applied to clearing them, and to bringing over them supplies for winter if they could be found.

Brent formed a detail of this plan which evidenced how rapidly thought was progressing. A month ago, when it was decided to do something or go somewhere, one or another leader simply took a group of men, usually fighting men, and started out. He might wander all over satisfying curiosity on the way. Quite often, even the thinkers forgot what they had started for.

Now Brent formed definite groups. There would be fighting men, for instance, whose sole job at the outset would be to guard areas while mappers worked. Later they would guard explorers, and when the explorers had found what they sought, they would lead the workers. Women could be used to help gather wood, but they were no good for hauling water. Water was hauled in big iron and metal tanks now . . . an old furnace boiler with the top smashed off; the body of a garbage truck; barrels. It was hard and heavy work and already it had been found the women had great vitality, but less strength.

Once planned and worked at steadily, the job went forward with astonishing speed. It was the first realization of the results steady, planned work would bring about. The custom arose of discussing matters and fashioning a plan of action.

At daylight one morning a wild alarm signal rang forth from the library. The tribe girded on swords, took bows and arrows, with which some of the men had been experimenting, and swept pell-mell out of side streets and the citadel, down the avenue to the library.

A tremendous tribe, larger by far than its own, was attacking the building.

Sherman had barricaded doors and windows, and from an upper floor was throwing firebrands into the howling crowd below.

Ug, watching the scene from a distance with Pat, thought of a plan of attack. The mob besieging the library was unconscious of their arrival. They could sneak around behind it and catch it by surprise. In the meantime, it was necessary to get the mayor into the building to supervise the barricading, which was giving way.

Little Gus, who knew more of the city's un-

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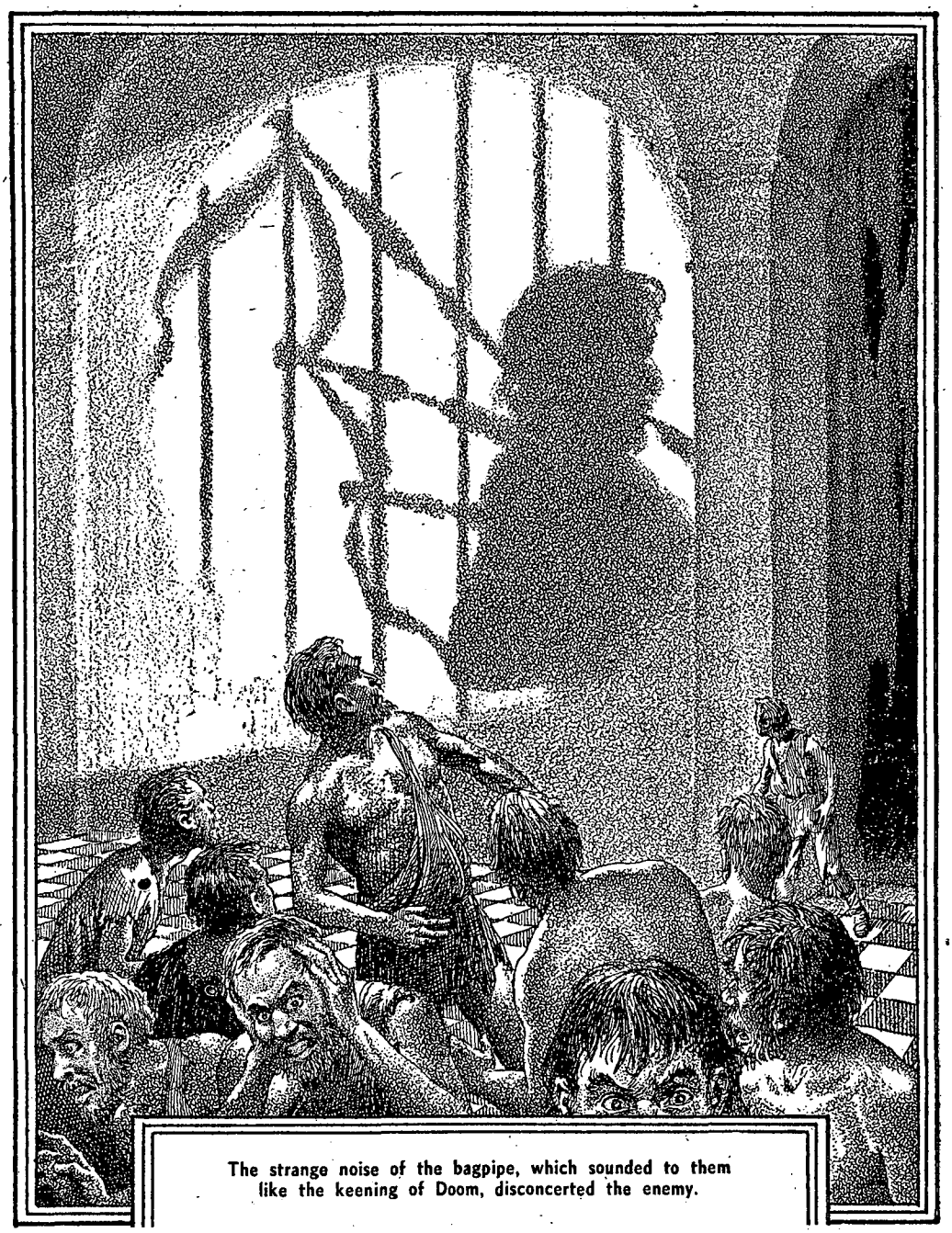

The strange noise of the bagpipe, which sounded to them like the keening of Doom, disconcerted the enemy.

derground than any of the others, supplied the information that there was a cave under the library. There might be an entrance through from there. One of the late captives, anxious to show his daring, volunteered to go through the enemy lines and bring back a firebrand.

His presence was unnoticed. In a few minutes he returned. Little Gus led the way, and the mayor, with a party of huskies, disappeared into what had formerly been the crosstown subway.

Pat organized his fighters into groups, gave instructions to each leader. The lust of battle rose in their breasts. They gripped their weapons tightly as they looked at the superior num-

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bers of the enemy, armed only with clubs and pieces of pipe. Pat sent messengers back for the animal with many arms that made terrible noises, and for the drums. Quickly, silently, the groups moved around through side streets, surrounded the attacking horde.

Pat's warriors numbered perhaps fifteen hundred. The enemy were twice that size. They were not so large, but they were fat and well fed and brave. Some of them paused in their attack upon the library from time to time to fight amongst themselves. Their leader superintended the action of a great heavy battering-ram slung in a tripod. Ug was astounded by this machine of war. Its force was many times greater than a ram in the hands of men. He wondered if they could overcome the superior enemy, saw some of his men, slinking away in fear.

Pat's signal came. With a wild cry of hate and blood lust, Ug rushed into the midst of the enemy. In his excitement for the battle, he threw away his swords, picked up a club.

The teaching and learning of a year of civilization fell away as he fought amongst the enemy. His face contorted with rage and savage ferocity. He was Ug, the mighty, the strong, the crafty, the man who had fought in fire and led his tribe wandering over great distances! Screaming and fighting, crushing the life from a man as he pushed onward, he headed toward the machine of war and the leader.

Chapter Three

THE BIRTH OF TRADE

LONG hours the battle raged. Pat's fighters proved their courage against the superior forces of the enemy. Their fighting blood less savage, his men were the better hand-to-hand fighters. The arrows from their bows wrought havoc in the enemy ranks.

A motley fight it was—howling, bloodthirsty savages fighting on the very spot that, short years before had been the veritable center of civilization, culture, industrial and scientific activity.

The swords and knives of Pat's tribe carried swift death into the enemy ranks. But each assault by the club-weaponed enemy brought dire destruction and fear into his own. The enemy fought systematically, by orders from leaders. Even when Ug's men were making inroads upon one flank, a group of the enemy continued to operate the battering machine, undistracted by the fighting at their back. Around the enemy leader formed a V-shaped wedge of fighters which moved about at his command, flying into the thick of Pat's unorganized ranks, its front rows filled from behind as soon as warriors dropped. The flying wedge was impregnable, killing and retreating before Pat or Ug could organize a counter-attack. It fought with greater ferociousness than Pat's tribe, and it fought as a unit.

The crisis in the battle came. Pat's warriors wavered, turned, broke in flight, leaving him with only a handful of men in the midst of the enemy wedge. Ug, surrounded by a corner of the wedge, fighting with bare hands and a huge club atop a pile of dead and wounded, had forgotten leadership in the glory of primeval combat. Suddenly he saw his men fall back, saw Pat sorely pressed by the wedge. Ug's first reaction was rage that his own men had deserted. He started to Pat's aid, forgetful of all except his own strength and valor.

Instinct told him to drive toward the enemy leader, to rend the opposing strong man joint from joint. Thought told him to wait, to organize his own forces. Not superior force alone was defeating his tribe. It was the order of that flying wedge. Changing his course, he fought his way to the rear of his breaking ranks, found the men with drums and the one with the bagpipe, the gigantic bat that had once awed him into submissiveness. He ordered them to make noise.

With a throaty roar, he drove his warriors back into the fight. Ripping, hitting, clubbing, killing, he drove them into a solid pack, the hindmost forcing the retreating front ranks to press forward again. Suddenly he appeared at the head of his own wedge, clearing the enemy from before him as a threshing machine cuts grain, shaming his men into battle.

The strange noises of the bagpipe disconcerted the enemy. The opposing wedge could not withstand the massed assault of swords. It wavered, broke in upon itself, was forced upon the steps of the library. At a sign from the leader, they threw down clubs, stood panting, bloody, in ordered defeat.

Pat, staggering from loss of blood, made the leader kneel, placed his foot upon his neck. Turning to Ug, he presented him with the leader's club in recognition of the fact that Ug had won the battle.

He called forth to those inside the library. No answer came. Barricaded doors and windows remained shut. Puzzled, Pat had one window broken through. There was no sign of Sherman, the mayor, little Gus, or any of the party left in defense of the library. Mysteriously, they had vanished into space.

Brent looked upon the captives with approving eyes. Young, intelligent, they would be a boon to the clan. They had women and food and not as great, but a more systematic knowledge. Once, their leader had been an

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accountant. Their leader showed no further antagonism. Admitting defeat, he asked only that his tribe be allowed to live with the captors. He understood Brent's sign language readily. His people were used to orders and would behave, he promised. They knew many of the lessons of civilization.

Their experience and knowledge of the city was tremendous. They knew, for instance, that the city was an island entirely surrounded by water; that Ug's clan had walked across a ford in the Harlem River; that there was another clan near the city even larger than their combined forces; that across the Harlem from where Ug had come were unbelievably large numbers of people. And they knew where there were many caves of food. But some could not be broken into, even with the battering-ram.

Sending Ug home with the captives, Pat searched for the missing warriors. Long after, they came up from behind. Their torch had gone out and they had been lost in the subway. When they arrived at the citadel, they found the captured tribe already adapting itself to its new home and the few laws of Brent's clan. Hum was scrutinizing each of the male captives with the puzzled, questing look new men always brought to her face. She herself did not realize what she was looking for. But deep within her, love told her that some day would come the man.

The caves of food turned out to be freight cars on depot sidings. They were of steel, and there seemed no way of opening them. The supply of food the captives brought was soon gone. The clan faced starvation with the knowledge that there were many, many caves of food at hand.

Smith now made a wonderful discovery. He found long white sticks with pieces of cloth and metal in their ends. They smelt good, but their taste was disagreeable. Not able to eat them, he stuck them in a hip pocket to give to Hitt. Stooping over the fire that night, the projecting cloth caught fire and sputtered. It frightened Smith. Instinctively, he threw the sticks from him. There was a blinding flash of light and a roar where they landed. Two men and a chest were blown into small pieces.

Hitt immediately saw the possibilities of the new discovery. Going to the cave where there were many white sticks, he spent days in experiment, finally learning the use and handling of explosives and miraculously escaping destruction. He had dynamite and fire carried to the caves where the food was. A charge, laid against a freight-car door, simply loosened it. He tried a bigger charge. It turned the car over. The third charge blew its side open.

They discovered endless wealth—carloads of food, materials, shoes, knives, and many things they did not know how to use. There was much bottled vegetable and fruit juice. The bottles would have remained untouched had not Ug noticed that some had labels similar to those on cans among their food supplies. The juices were tried warily, found good, brought health to the ailing.

Scappella found an entire car full of peculiar animals with round legs. They had three eyes in front and one in back, no heads, and arms twisted stiffly backward. Stepping on the side of one caused a loud explosion. The animal growled and shook. Terrified, Scappella jumped, his arm hitting some part of the animal. It barked, jumped forward, jerked him from his feet before he could let go. Madly it careened down a street, and finally threw him into a mud puddle.

He had found motorcycles.

Eventually he learned to use them, at a cost of many bruises. But in the end they all ran out of gas and he could get no further service from them.

Haw, and the new captured leader, known as "See," worked to find the use of the long round sticks with holes through their centers and the smaller ones made of the same material as knives. One day one exploded. But—mystery of mysteries—a large mirror at the other end of the room crashed! See pointed his gun instinctively and pulled the trigger again. A jar broke! And in the wall behind was a little round hole.

With great caution and sense of danger, they tried various things with the rifles until they learned how to load and fire them with some accuracy. They found ample ammunition in the sporting-goods stores. Eventually, they shot down the walls in See's apartment, and he had to move to another.

Brent and his council now made a trip throughout the section of the city far to the south of the citadel. They sat on deeply upholstered chairs set upon delivery carts and were pushed. A large group went in advance to find a way through the débris and clear a path for the carts.

Brent was astounded by the sights. It was his first trip to lower Manhattan. They came to the rotting mess of what had once been wet grain, and what Pat had thought was a loaf of bread. Smith pointed out the clutter and filth and flies and rats overrunning the lower end of the city. Brent decided that the streets should be cleared in the interests of public safety. Smith found dozens of spotless street-cleaners' uniforms and adopted them as his special garb. He wore the coats backward.

Pat showed Brent more gold than they could ever move. Most of it was in the cellar of a

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small building only partly fallen in. Brent realized the small value of gold when there was so much of it, and allowed the clan to take what it wanted to use for ornamentation.

There was one gigantic building that had withstood all the explosions and tidal waves. The council climbed its heights, luckily taking food and blankets, for they were forced to spend the night in the tower.

The sight which met their gaze filled them with awe. For the first time, they saw their land lying beneath them. They could even see and identify their citadel! Brent, fearful of roving bands, established an outpost to keep watch in the tower. They were given the biggest bell which could be found for signaling.

See now took to teaching Pat's huskies the use of firearms. The clan divided daily, small groups going to various duties in many sections of the city.

Suddenly, in mid-fall, the alarm bells beat forth a terrific warning of attack at the citadel. From all parts of town, the clan hurried to join in defense. A huge tribe, perhaps twenty times as large as theirs, had been spied coming in from the north! But it did not come within sight that night.

Next morning it was seen—a wild, unkempt, diseased horde that fought and ravished and burned as it passed along in disordered fashion. Its fighting men were armed with clubs and tools. It came south to the park and turned west toward the river. Apparently it had no scout system, for it seemed unaware of Brent's clan. It was savage, unorganized, sick. But its very size was staggering, terrifying.

Scouts were sent to spy upon the strange clan of barbarians, numbering many thousands. Brent called a war council. The enemy was strong. No such number of people could long live in the city without discovering them. His clan might barricade their citadel and wait for attack. They might divide into many small bands and harry the enemy stragglers. He wished that the giant searchlight, the "sun" which had terrified Ug's clan, was still working. But long since it had ceased to shine. There was no possibility that his small clan could defeat the enemy in open battle.

See gave a few brief orders to his own tribe, gathered in hushed ranks in the park before the citadel. He left for the great cave with Haw to gather more ammunition. This cave had once been one of the large armories. As yet, it had not been thoroughly investigated.

WHILE looking for ammunition, See found a machine gun. He knew it was a gun by its feel and smell, but it was strange and he did not discover how to operate it. For an hour he poked about. Finally he found one with a cartridge belt in place, pulled the trigger. The flying handle broke a finger, but he discovered how it worked.

He found others mounted, ready to load. He had no time to go through the complicated study of how to put unmounted ones together. But he took the mounted ones and many belts of ammunition at hand. He noticed that the gun with sand bags over its legs shot well. He had bags of dirt prepared for the three guns he took.

The early autumn night threw its mantle of darkness over the city. Silently, with swiftly beating hearts, Brent's clan started across the city. By the river front they could see the fires of the enemy clan, hear the disorder of their rudimentary savage chatter. Brent had a last-minute idea. Let the gunners pick out the enemy leaders, try to kill them first. They must not fire until they were close.

For blocks, the clan crept forward, expecting every moment to hear alarm signals in the enemy camp, to be set upon by ambush. In the lead of the little army went three delivery carts, a machine gun mounted on each. Soon, they came to the very end of the streets opening upon the broad thoroughfare in which the enemy was encamped. Pat gave one sharp beat upon his bell. Suddenly, clattering awful sound into the quiet of night, the three machine guns in the hands of Pat, Ug, and See spat modern death into the ranks of a barbarous horde three thousand mental years behind them.

Chaos reigned in the enemy camp. See's gun jammed. He jumped from his wagon, took charge of his own fighters, led them around blocks, to come upon the south flank of the enemy.

The enemy was not long in confusion and terror. What the spitting death was, they did not know. But, like a people who have gone through much and become inured to surprise, they quickly gathered around their leader—a savage lot, ferocious, hardened by the most barbarous living, too ignorant to feel great fear or to recognize defeat as long as their leaders stood.

Pat gave another signal. The machine guns gave way to rifles and pistols. Haw aimed carefully at an enemy leader. On his fifth shot, he killed him. The bullets seemed more to annoy the enemy than scare them. In a mighty wave, they broke in a charge for Brent's clan.

There was no time for the arrows now. With an answering roar of blood lust, Pat and Ug led their warriors to the fray. The clans dashed together like two mighty waves—one, a tremendous long-combed surface wave; the other, smaller, but with the compact power of

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a ground swell. Too late, Pat and Ug realized their lust for battle had overcome their judgment. They should have retreated, spread the enemy, used up their shots and arrows before coming to mass fighting. Shrieks and groans of fear and hate cut the night like screams of thousands of drowning vultures.

The "sunshine" group of Brent's warriors wrought confusion in the enemy ranks for a few minutes. But the fire of battle was too strong. They were not capable of holding the enemy and throwing fear into their ranks. They began to fight, used their flashlights as weapons. Soon, the lights were broken.

One of the enemy, forced into a camp fire, caught fire, ran throughout the scene of battle, a flaming, screaming thing.

Behind Brent's lines, the women lit their firebrands, howled, and screamed ferociously. Surprisingly, the enemy were not terrified by the great numbers they suspected. They fought to get through the front lines, to meet the warriors lingering behind.

The tide of victory swung to the enemy. Many of them had axes and brought great havoc to Brent's ranks. Grim death, certain death, was written in their superior numbers. Like demons, Pat and Ug fought, giving courage to their men. The smell of sweat, the shadows of glistening bodies, the groans of the dying, the roars of the warriors, the screams of the women, mingled with the smoke of torches and fires, soared upward against the tall buildings, out over the dark, gurgling river.

Like thousands of arrows, See's flying wedge suddenly drove unexpectedly into the southern flank of the enemy, forcing it to retreat, causing chaos amidst the main body. But the enemy numbers were too large. Time, a matter of minutes or hours, and Brent's clan would be no more.

Eee, brandishing a firebrand, looked and saw Ug, tall and dark and powerful, his body glistening with dripping blood in the smoky light, surrounded by his stoutest warriors, fighting savagely against numbers ten times his own. She saw certain defeat, for she could see the whole battle and how quickly their own ranks were thinning.

Terrified for the life of her man, she ran into the battle, ducking and worming her way to his side. Hands reached out to tear at her; knives slashed against her side. An ax barely missed her head. Ug saw her coming, rushed to strike down a giant just as a heavy club was lifted over her head. Quickly, somehow, in the midst of the roar and confusion and fighting, she made him understand. Like an impregnable moving fortress, throwing off attack like water, he protected her and moved to the side of Hitt. With arms flaying in all directions and his grunts drowned by the shrieking and clash of steel, he made Hitt understand. Turning, they fought clear of the fight, ran with superhuman speed back to the citadel.

Soon they returned, breathless, pushing a cart piled high. They paused to look at the battle, saw that their foes were thickest toward the river front where the frightened and hurt had gathered, saw their own ranks being torn into bits. Ug sent Hitt with a message to Pat, pushed his cart forward, stood in a cleared space brandishing a torch. Suddenly, something white and flaring and sizzling flew over the enemy, landed amidst the women and wounded on the river bank. It exploded, killing several. Another and another followed in rapid succession. Like stampeding cattle, they ran in fright into the midst of their own ranks, causing disorder and fear.

Pat's bell rang forth a sharp, clear command. His fighters rushed to the spot where he was standing. In turmoil and anger with their own noncombatants, the others were too occupied to follow. Screaming unintelligibly, their leaders attempted to rally the warriors and scare back the disrupting element.

In the center of the field, Ug suddenly appeared, pushing his cart. Working with machinelike precision, he lit fuse after fuse, sent sticks of dynamite hurtling into enemy crowds. For a moment, the enemy hesitated, then with a wild cry rushed toward him in a huge wave. He threw dynamite as they neared, but each time the gaps in their ranks were filled as water covers the spot where a stone has landed. The horde converged upon him, each man shouting with hate and battle lust, hopeful of the glory of making the kill.

As they came upon him, he pushed his firebrand into the pile wagon, turned, and fled just as the enemy reached the spot where he had stood. Unmindful of the wagon, they pursued. There was an instant of sputtering. Then a mighty blast of light and a resounding roar rent the air. The ground shook; hundreds were thrown to their knees; there were screams and shrieks of horror. Parts of human bodies rained down from the air.

Pat gave his bell a tremendous beat, cracking it in two. With a shout of victory, his warriors swept against the demoralized enemy. Hacking, stabbing, killing, they forced them toward the river. Foot by foot, giving no time for quarter or for rallying, they pushed the frightened horde toward the cold current. On See's flank, there was a momentary rally. If the enemy broke through See in that quarter, it would turn the tide of battle. Ug's woman saw the danger. With a shrill cry, she gathered

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the women, led them in a rush to the hard-fought quarter. Brandishing flaming torches before them, they forced the enemy back.

In minutes, now, the battle was won. Up to the very brink of the river, Pat's warriors fought with intense cruelty, striking down warriors, women, and children without pause, forcing thousands to jump into the gurgling currents, where their cries ended in throaty gurgles. Not more than five thousand of the enemy remained.

A great fire was built. Brent's clan spent the night watching the fallen captives. The next morning their ranks were examined. A scurvy lot, with much disease and little intelligence. There was no pity in Brent's heart; he saw only danger to his own sadly thinned clan. The weak, the diseased, the maimed were sent to meet their fate in the gurgling waters of the river. A few hundred of the stoutest had saved themselves the night before and were routed out of hiding from farther down the shore. Twenty-five hundred, including wounded warriors, were all the prisoners the clan took back.

It had been a brilliant victory. A victory of civilization over savagery. But the cost had been staggering. Sadness, not joy, held the hearts of Brent's clan. Yet Brent was satisfied. They had needed these slaves.

DURING the execution of the diseased and uselesss, Hum came to the rescue of one captive. He was a slight man, more dead than alive, suffering from many sores, malnutrition, dirt, stomach trouble, and cold. Filth and vermin covered his emaciated body. Yet he had fought hand-to hand with the healthiest warriors of Brent's clan and carried several deep and honorable scars across his thin chest. His hair and beard were matted with filth; his body smelled unpleasantly from the running festers. But Hum felt something within her pull toward this being.

She tugged at Ug's arm. She wanted the useless being. Ug was puzzled, but gave the captive to her. Later, bathed and shaven, his wounds treated with salt, he presented a face that hinted of latent intelligence.

For several weeks, Hum regarded him closely, puzzled. Then her interest in him died. But he was on the road to health by then, learning the lessons of civilization rapidly. He became a student of Hitt's, and eventually showed great brain power and imagination. Once, he had been a fellow scientist of Goddard's.

For the most part, the captives were of an inferior breed. They learned slowly, had to be punished continually for breaking the laws of the clan. With few exceptions, they were used for the hard manual labor and duties of brute strength. Their greatest contribution to the clan was man power. Well-defined pride in itself took root in Brent's clan, causing greater introspection and regard for the laws and customs established. By contrast, Brent's people now regarded it their special privilege to live up to laws and give the most that was in them to the forwarding of civilization, learning, intelligence. The desire to rise above brute status was established.

Brent considered the recent near defeat. He had never dreamed that such a large clan existed. If one that large had come from the north, would other larger, perhaps more intelligent, ones come in the future? With his council, he made a tour of the upper end of the island.

They came to the Harlem River. Its bridges were down, but they had filled in with débris, making easily navigable fords. Brent ordered the fords destroyed. After a lengthy hunt for sufficient explosive—Drik's idea—great stores of dynamite were found and the heavy steel bridgework broken up. With ropes and chains, with crowbars and levers, the entire clan labored for many days. At last, the river flowed free across the northern end of the island again. More than a hundred men had been crushed or drowned or blown to pieces during the work of clearing the river.

But Brent did not yet feel safe. He explored the entire coast of his island. Across in Brooklyn, he was told, figures could be seen on the shores. He could not see that far himself, but he set up camp in an open spot and ordered attempts at communication.

The next day, many had gathered on the opposite shores. From the tower of the high building came detailed reports of their activities. Binoculars had been found and their use recently discovered. The Brooklyn people were waving and making signs. They were many, and armed, but seemed friendly.

It was not easy for man, with his limited experience and knowledge, to conceive of future possibilities. Brent felt dangers mostly from instinct. His intellect was able to convert these instincts into conscious thought. But the precise details of thought pictures . . . the details of knowledge . . . were lacking. Thus, Brent felt fear of starvation in the future. Yet there was no sign the city had given out of food. How could he think of the city actually giving out when they had always found it, eventually, and he had no means of knowing that cans of food were not "natural"?

In the same way he felt fear of eventually being swept upon by a tribe bigger and more intelligent than his own. But it was difficult to conceive of what greater intelligence they

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could have. Where would they come from and how had they lived? Why hadn't they come before? The clan they had just defeated had been driven down into the city by need for food. Was all the food there? Was that all the food there was? Then what had kept the clan across the river alive?

By instinct, Brent would have liked to fortify the edges of the city and keep closed off from all the world. His intellect told him this was not possible. Men had to get out and explore, take the risk of learning what other people knew. There was much yet to learn. That was the great driving force of Brent's thoughts and actions these days. Man's mind needed knowledge as his body needed water. He had the idea that maybe man would never learn all there was to know. But groping to form and express such enormous thoughts to himself wore a man out. Brent returned his mind to immediate matters at hand.

He saw wood float by. It occurred to him that a man might be able to ride a piece of wood across. It was too far to swim. Rowboats and oars had long since been discovered, but their use was unknown.

Hitt was the first to think of using the boats. He had seen pictures of their use in the library. Sherman had once seen a detailed picture of the use of oars. The boats were tried. Two sank from leaks, but the third floated. Eventually, a delegation headed by Hitt, with Ug the master-at-arms, set out for the opposite shore. It was a daring feat.

The rowers labored clumsily against the current. Once the little boat was carried swiftly against a strut of the old fallen bridge projecting from the river. It nearly capsized. Faces white and teeth set, the little party struggled onward to safety.

Hitt, most proficient with sign language, grunted and made signs at the large tribe they found awaiting them. There were many warriors, armed with weapons similar to their own, except that they had no guns. Ug fired a few shots as they neared the shore, which brought consternation to the faces of the strangers. Four men stepped forward to help them land. They had a good sign language, similar to Hitt's, and showed high intelligence. But they were barefoot and looked with envy upon men possessing such luxuries as shoes. All were friendly. They had often watched Brent's clan across the river and admired them and the wonders of their city. The passage of the river was a great conquest, winning their respect.

Hitt learned that there were four large tribes in Brooklyn, all on friendly terms and with a well-established system of barter. There had been fights over food the previous winter. But enough people had been killed off to make the food last. During the summer they had found great stores of food in the warehouses near the docks. The food would last throughout the coming winter.

A large number of one clan had been carried away upon the water, never to return. They had been investigating an ocean liner. Its cable snapped, and the boat drifted away before the explorers could get ashore. They had discovered the operation of a gasoline shovel and a large tank of gasoline. It was a marvelous mechanism which crawled and performed many useful bits of work. They had also found that it needed to be greased in places, and they had found grease and oil.

The leaders of the four tribes returned to Manhattan after a few days of hospitality. They were as intelligent as Brent's clan, but had not had the opportunities to develop their intelligence as much. They came with great fear and awe of the men who could make sticks bark and had shoes and could ride upon the turbulent waters.

For a week, they were shown the best Brent had to offer, inspected his domain, witnessed the many luxuries he had, were immensely impressed with his system of education and the progress made in deciphering the peculiar bugs in the books at the library. At night they compared experiences since the beginning of memory.

THE FATES of the tribes had been very similar. For a while, the Brooklyn tribes had lived in the long, narrow caves under the ground. But the air had become bad and the tunnels had slowly filled with water. They had moved into private homes. Once, one of their men had climbed into a strange-looking thing and played with its teeth. It had looked and smelled like an engine, but it had proved to be a strange giant bird, for it suddenly made terrible noises and flew away, never to return.

Before Brent could suggest it, the four Brooklyn chiefs asked to be made part of his clan. They could establish communication by fire and bell and mirror signalling easily enough, and bartering would be to the advantage of all. They would like to send some of their own people to live with Brent, and have some of Brent's teachers come to their homes. They made generous offers of goods that they would give in exchange for his protection and law and governing.

Schools of navigation were set up on both sides of the river. The tribes vied with one another to produce the best oarsmen and find the best boats.

It grew cold now, and the river grew angry. Several times, boats left one shore to be

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overturned or carried out into the harbor. It became impossible to navigate the river. Many of Brent's clan had gone to Brooklyn, and many of the Brooklyn tribe were left in New York for the winter. Signal fires were kept burning. On good days, the two tribes could communicate by bells.

Suddenly, another winter came. It grew bitter cold, and the tribes retired to the warmth of their houses. Coated with ice and snow, struts of the great fallen bridge stuck up through the river, a white warning that the waters were no longer passable.

The winter passed without great incident. Brent's clan took pride in teaching the newcomers; they took great pride in learning. The winter was colder than the last; but it was spent in greater comfort. Ample wood was found; depots had many freight cars of food which could be opened with dynamite. Small tribes and groups of people appeared from the depths and secret hiding places of the city. Awkward and frightened, they gestured their desire to join the rich, powerful, well-fed clan.

They brought simple treasures in homage. One man appeared with four women, more than twenty cats, fifteen well-trained dogs. The immense value of the dogs and cats won him the rights of a free man and a substantial place in the community. He told a great tale of the underground caverns of the city, where he had lived most of the time. They were partially filled with water, but, except for places which could easily be cleared, they were level and unblocked, as were many streets. Some had fallen in, but one subway stretched all the way from Brent's tower outpost downtown up past his house, and there was not much débris. The caverns were overrun with rats, but they might be useful in case of attack.

Everybody worked that winter, laziness being punishable by death. There was much to be done to make habitations livable. There was much exploring that could be done, in spite of the snow and ice.

Brent had great maps of the city with discoveries of value marked upon them. His own map showed the great store of dynamite, a cave full of knives and tools, the caves of food, another cave with a great deal of material stored therein, his various outposts, supplies of wood, and other places. He explained the map to the newcomer, had him draw a line where the subway ran.

The mayor found a great store of putty and glass and learned how to cut glass and insert windowpanes. All the windows in the citadel were replaced. In many houses, furnaces now gave heat, although inexperience with heating systems caused many explosions, and one fire.

See, the former Wall Street broker, found a business for himself. Bartering had become so widespread that a common bartering place was needed. With Brent's permission, he took over a large store where he exchanged goods of all nature for their owners, charging a percentage on the transaction. So great was the commerce that he needed assistants and employed help. This was the first time in the new history that wages were paid.

Wages were essentials, such as good clothing, and tools. Vincent Singe, who once had cornered gold in the world market, suddenly showed latent ability. He opened another trading mart. Both were successful. Competition was keen. Singe got a slight edge on business when he found many sleds and offered transportation of purchases to those trading at his store. But he was grasping and not such a fair dealer as See, who retained the better-class patronage. All payments were made in barter. Business was the old world's "horse trading" at its sharpest.

The mayor, with four helpers, went into the business of repairing and building. Fixing chimneys and doors and blocking up windows kept him busy. Hitt discovered cement. But it was the mayor who gloried in working with it, who refined the process of mixing, discovered that sand and stones were needed to make it hold and that different mixtures got different results.

Scappella, at the price of a broken leg, learned how to operate, stop, start, and guide an automobile. It jogged along slowly, for its tires were flat. A youth from Brooklyn suggested filling it with gas from a tank he saw similar to the one in Brooklyn.

Peter Ship, when he was not working on messages of Brent's or the maps, spent time at the museum studying the pictures. He was learning to handle color fairly well. Hum had taken three girls and a boy under her wing, teaching them to play the piano. She learned to improvise her own songs, the first creative act of the new life.

Babies arrived regularly, and three women became proficient in bringing them into the world.

One tragedy marred the winter. One of the professors heading an exploration party found a hospital and discovered cans of ether. The fumes overcame the party. They were found dead days later, and the building forbidden the rest of the clan.

The use of needles and thread was learned. This was a most important discovery, winning Mrs. Cosgrave a place in the limelight again. Fashion plates were found in a bookstore. The women set to making clothes from whatever material was available. Thin rugs,

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drapes, bath curtains, and colored prints went up in value. But the styles were disastrous to Brent's people, for they were the style of the cumbersome '90s and interfered with the activities of a hard-working community. Brent was forced to pass the first style legislation, prohibiting any garment which interfered with movements of the body.

SPRING came, bringing both joy and fear to Brent's clan. Smith superintended the spring cleaning. Free of the winter's filth, bodies felt better, blood flowed faster, and hearts were naturally light. But the clan faced starvation again. Rapidly, the last food in the city was running low. No warehouses remained uninvestigated, no freight cars unopened. Brent was confronted by the gloomy fact that food was gone. Nothing edible was left!

There were elevators with immense stores of raw grain. But nobody could learn how to use it. The river was high and turbulent. It could not be crossed to gain aid from Brooklyn.

Suddenly, unexpectedly, a delegation arrived from Brooklyn in a large, seaworthy, deep-water boat. It was manned by twelve men, two to an oar.

The Brooklyn men had exciting news. One of their younger members, anxious to show his daring and hardiness, had set forth for unknown places before the close of winter. Far down Long Island he had traveled, and seen many people. They lived in very small tribes and were savage and ran at his approach. But one being had been friendly. He had discovered the use of a hand mill and how to pick grain, which grew uncultivated. The meal, when mixed with water, was edible. When cooked, it was the same thing they had discovered in bags and boxes!

This was the first time any of Brent's people had thought of connecting growing things and the things they found. Brent had the Brooklyn men taken to the giant grain elevators; he came back highly excited. The grain he had just seen was what the man on Long Island ground up! Hurriedly, Brent sent an expedition to visit the Long Island farmer. Peter Ship was taken to sketch the machine. It was a long journey, taking three weeks. The Brooklyn tribes spared as much food as possible, but when the expedition returned, Brent's clan was living on rations stricter than the first winter of terrible starvation.

Peter's sketches were exhibited to the clan. They were crude, but graphic. Suddenly, little Gus came forward. He knew a building where there was a giant machine something like the sketch. It was many times larger, but maybe it was the same. Undoubtedly it was the right one. Bags of raw grain and flour were in the same building. But it was a huge thing, and there was no way of making it work.

All the brains of Brent's clan concentrated on how to make the mill go. Finally, Hitt, Drik, and Scappella worked out a method. It took a great deal of man power, and was slow. There were serious accidents. But the grain was ground and came out on the floor below—*meal!* Later in the summer an automobile was hooked up to the machine to supply power. Thereafter, only the chiefs and council could use autos, gasoline being too precious to waste. The clan had had its lesson and knew that things could give out.

Transportation was easier. They had found how to make carts, and that axles needed grease, and a certain number of the many old autos and trucks had been patched up to run. When they broke down, however, for want of minor adjusting or due to carbon choke, they had to be discarded. Although it was understood the autos drank gas and would not run without it, it was not understood how the gasoline worked, what the parts of the autos did.

More successful was the study of boats. The mayor and little Gus had fathomed the puzzle of leaks. The mystery lay in caulking. Eee helped on that by finding and trying to cook tar. Eating it made a whole unit very sick—and killed one. But it was nice to chew upon a piece of it. It gave the gums a nice clean feeling.

Although the clan could not figure this out, the greatest damage done to the city, aside from fires and explosions, was the cumulative damage of time. Small cracks became big cracks and objects of worth were passed up or discarded because repair and upkeep were not understood. It was the mayor and the Brooklyn boatmen who discovered the need of maintenance, and Drik who suggested this revolutionary idea might be applied to everything.

Thus was born the first tinkering and repair . . . the mending of pots and pans, the resoling of shoes, the repair of caves instead of moving out. Scappella now came back into his own, and Woof, the truck driver, who had not been of more than passing usefulness, became an important member of the clan. He showed a talent for mending things. He was also the one to discover belt power, by which the big meal mill now operated.

Everybody now wanted to be in business. The problems of civilization became sudden and acute. Theft had to be punished by death. But the problems were deeper than such basic instincts. There were problems arising out of

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language. Although all of the clans under Brent could make themselves understood in general, they understood in various ways. For instance, the sign and sound for "big" might be taken many ways. So might the expression, "Good condition."

Squabbles arose and blood flowed. People took sides and feuds began to endanger clan life. Brent thought long on this, and finally introduced compulsory schooling. High and low had to attend. One specific meaning was given to sounds and signs. When it might be misinterpreted, a council headed by Hitt thought up a new sound or sign.

Then there were rising the evils of barter; the impoverishing of the dull by the smart; the right of discovery and right of force. Singe laid claim to a whole area of warehouses and held it with a private army. Brent sent Pat to smash his army and confiscate the property. He set up this law: all found property belonged to the state. For it, the state would issue tokens to the finders. These tokens were money and good anywhere for trade. They represented a unit of value, and immediately tended to level prices. Merchants hereafter bought requirements from the state and sold them at a higher price.

Competition, the law of supply and demand, set all prices. Services, such as repair work and created objects, could be charged for according to agreement. Those with skills now made out as well as those with possessions. The money was round metal disks in various sizes, found and confiscated by the state. Once it had been U. S. coinage. Bills and banknotes had not yet been found of use. There were also secret private finds of coins put into circulation, which would have been equivalent to counterfeit, but under the loose expansion of this reborn civilization, the counterfeit simply stimulated trade. Commerce now flowed.

Haw established a regular boat line to Brooklyn with a subsidy from Brent and transportation charges. Long Island was combed and conquered, the small tribes being absorbed into Brent's clan. The island yielded up potatoes and corn and animals which could be killed for meat. But they proved to have a better value alive, for they gave milk. And milk was good and highly prized.

The summer came, and life flowed smoothly. But Brent looked into the future. Cultivation had not been thought of. He had reports of potatoes and grain growing on Long Island, but they would not be sufficient to feed the city forever. He looked at the heights of the Palisades across the Hudson. He was told that people, many people, could be seen there. Perhaps there was much food. Perhaps they had useful learning. He called a council, and it was decided to send an expedition. It would be a large force, and it would conquer whatever tribes and lands it found. But, first, let friendly gestures be made. Let battle be avoided if possible.

Preparations for the journey were made. Brent retired alone for several days of thought. He felt that he was growing old, that a younger man should take his place. Ug and See were his logical successors. But Pat was the hero of the tribe. See was most energetic, had greater imagination than Ug. But he was not so great a leader. Nor did he have Eee for a woman. And Eee had brains, which would mean much to the welfare of the clan. He must build Ug into a more popular hero. Too, if Ug headed the expedition, he would broaden and be able to lead better.

In the middle of the summer, Brent gave sign that Ug would lead the expedition. Pat looked at Ug with friendly envy. The stoutest warriors of the clan were picked to accompany him. Hitt was taken as adviser. The best weapons, four machine guns, and much dynamite were loaded onto wagons with food and heavy covering. Warriors put their women into the keeping of friends during their absence. Eee wept at the departure. Together with Hum, she went back under Brent's protection.

Amidst great excitement, the final preparations were pushed forward. Much gold, many knives, a great variety of material, strings of beads, and paint and mattresses were taken for barter. The assembled fleets of all five tribes were brought around to the Hudson. At the last minute, a new supply of coffee was found in Brooklyn. It would take too long to work a boat back to that side of the island. Yet Brent wished to send coffee with Ug. A boat was taken out of the Hudson and hauled across the island by Brent's private car. Loaded to the gunwales, it brought the coffee to the island. Brent took only one fifth of the load, giving the rest to Ug.

Ug departed at dawn one morning, leaving hours before schedule so as to avoid the confusion of departure with the excited clan bidding good-by. Haw shone as a great navigator that day, transporting all the expedition and its goods and wagons without loss of a bag of flour or a man.

For three years the clan waited in vain for Ug's reappearance. He was missed, and life did not seem the same without him. Brent ordered the city cleared of débris, and the time was spent in demolishing falling structures, strengthening the ones in which they lived, clearing the roadways, rearranging stores, and discarding broken and useless objects. In a flash of inspiration, Pat ordered all débris car-

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ried to the lower end of the island and thrown off the Battery. Thus, the island was extended. Great progress was made in reading and drawing and mechanical research. Large supplies of gasoline were found, trucks used to cart and haul, the use of the donkey engine discovered.

Mostly, the clan lived on grain and potatoes and strange vegetables from Long Island. Speech was progressing, although sign language still seemed most expressive. There were no raids from enemy tribes. A few smaller tribes were captured as they wandered into the city from the north. Life progressed in a more orderly manner, leisure came to be known and games enjoyed; decoration within the home made its appearance. There were furs and materials and clothes for all. Shoes alone were rare.

Many instruments were found and played. Scappella's phonograph broke down, but he repaired it with great labor from pieces found in electric machines. Sometimes he could make cars run after they had broken. If not, they were dumped at the foot of the island and new ones found. Nobody had thought of pumping up tires, although there had been many blow-outs.

Chapter Four

REBIRTH

BRENT had learned in these years that man's nature is variable. His health and diet had a good deal to do with his thinking. But even in good health, the clan went from periods of hard physical exertion into periods of play, or periods of intense thought. The desire to learn was growing stronger. It was not simply curiosity. There was a thing akin to thirst inside of them for knowledge. They had the capacity for knowledge they did not yet possess and it was a void that wanted filling.

Undoubtedly this played a great part in the constant movement of individuals. Everybody was eager for new friends, new experiences. There was little difficulty in marital split-ups over children as children were loved by all, and in a way, were a common responsibility of the clan. If a child was caught away from home for the night, he wandered into any house at hand. Children were both adored and pampered and yet put on their own incredibly young. They were not severely punished for any act, but they were quickly and sharply punished for the smallest foolishness. By seven or eight years of age a child was expected to behave as a "lesser adult," although there was no way of knowing how old any other than the babies actually were.

Brent established three great projects in the first year of Ug's absence. The first was the result of Sherman's work at the library; the discovery of the difference in text books and other kinds. Child primers were found and recognized as a means of learning to read the as yet puzzling books. A special group was assigned to this, and supplied all reasonable needs and desires by the State.

Brent saw that not everybody had the same capacity for work or worked at the same rate. Some accomplished a great deal more and were entitled to special favor. But this caused jealousy and dissention. When special favor was granted, instead of stimulating those at the bottom, it tended to slow them down. Brent thereafter set this rule: that every working member of the clan was entitled to share in a basic living standard. This standard supplied the essentials of life. In return, each gave a certain amount of time to the clan. The rest of their time was their own, or else they were paid for certain clan jobs. What they made in their own time was individual property. In this way, some grew rich while others simply got along, but it put the initiative upon the individual.

There was a difficulty, however, with the students. Most of them were wrapped up in their work. They were driven by a desperate desire to solve the puzzle of certain text books, the illustrations of which showed methods and mechanisms they did not yet understand. Brent was troubled by this until he found that their desires were almost fulfilled if they were given the full freedom to work their own way.

At the outset, a profusely illustrated child's book was the most valuable find. This book showed how to use a windlass for bringing up buckets and other weights. It taught the right way of using a shovel. It led to understanding that a big nail often cracked a board where a small one would not. It led to understanding the old whet stones. The grind stones found had been used for sharpening, but they had been chocked into unmoving position. Now it was learned that to sharpen a tool most efficiently, the stone should be turned, and the means of turning it was figured out. From a book in the same section the most basic form of printing was discovered.

Brent set up a system of reports from Sherman's research group. When they learned something that could be of immediate use, they came and explained it to the council. The council then called in those who could make most likely use of this new knowledge. These were instructed, and the knowledge was then their "property." They were not actually protected in their sole right to use it, but they

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protected themselves by secrecy. The rough form of craft guilds came into existence.

The second big undertaking of that summer was to have one sample of everything found to date brought to the armory and spread out upon the floor. Those things of which the use was known were eliminated. Those things which everybody might need to know the use of, but had not learned, were demonstrated to the ignorant. And those things not fully understood were assigned to special groups for experiment and study. This was the suicide group. Its death and injury toll was heavy.

The third project was the orderly establishment of crafts and industries. A section for work shops was set aside. Each craft elected its own council and this an over-all council to which needs were made known. Thus the shoe industry had a need for old tires to be cut into soles. The upper council made arrangement with the transportation, military guard and exploration guilds to find and deliver the needed tires.

Another industry might find a machine it thought might do its work, but could not use the machine because it had been built for electric operation. The council would call in the machinists and make arrangements for experiment to see if the mechanism could be operated by other means. The most common power was belt power from a jacked up automobile. Steam was not yet well understood, although the mystery of steam heat had been solved, and in the middle of the summer Little Gus Shueller made the astonishing discovery that the enormous supplies of shiny black rock would burn if started off with a wood fire.

Life that winter was not as brutal for the clan as it had been. There was not too much heat nor food, but there was enough. They were beginning to understand drafts and the proper sealing up of caves. They had the use of needle and thread and began to comprehend the fashioning of clothes and the best materials to keep out cold. An enormous pool of disconnected knowledge had been gathered that year and stimulated thinking and ideas. This knowledge had to be spread out from the "experts," and there were endless plans.

It was a winter of experiment to find better methods and make things work. The use of soap had been discovered and greatly cut the toll of dirt and disease. An accurate common language was developed with the help of the phonographs. This language was based upon the world's old fashioned English, but meanings were disassociated. *Yes* and *No* came into the new language with the old meanings. But the word *baby* was used for coal, although coal was spelled the correct way.

In the middle of the winter, Little Gus, Drik and the mayor constructed an ice boat from old pictures. They spent most of the remainder of the winter alternating between the hospital and a study of how to use a sail. In the following spring this art was applied to river boats with great success.

With speech and writing, the rebirth of civilization really began. Dictionaries of basic English had been found and fairly well comprehended by Hitt's group under Hirsh. The first great liberal decision came as a result. Hirsh saw that enormous time would be consumed and wasted in trying to fathom all the other words in larger dictionaries whereas basic English seemed to meet most of their needs.

He brought this up in council and it was decided to make basic English the language of the clan. Students could go as far as they liked beyond that, but this made it possible for everybody to learn expression and understanding in short order. Also, it did away with such foolishness as eight or ten words all meaning the same thing. The exceptions to this were the technical expressions developing within the crafts.

With the discovery that coal burned and considerable experiment with steam heat, Little Gus' thoughts had returned to the yard full of intriguing iron engines across town. He had crawled into the fire boxes of an engine and discovered coal and ash, and he had found an engine tender tank held water. Now he knew that the coal had to be ignited, and that its heat turned the water into steam. He was not exactly sure what the steam did, but he had a hunch it might make the engine move.

He was bursting to tell this to the clan, but he didn't want to prove a fool. He confided in Drik and they sneaked off with the first good spring weather to the old railroad yards. They cleaned a firebox and saw that the engine had water and stoked up a fresh coal fire. They stoked it high, but nothing happened until late that day when suddenly the engine began to throb and knock and suddenly burst out hissing sounds that scared them into a panicked jump and race for home.

They came back stealthily the next day, lying on a roof and studying the railroad yard for a long time before they ventured down. The engine was still there, now, apparently returned to its good humor. The fire still burned, but the engine made no noise. Drik fooled around with the fire box and discovered the way to shake down the coal. They stoked up fresh, and the same thing happened.

The next time they did not wait for the engine to get mad. They began to tinker

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around with the levers and gauges and throttles. Suddenly, wonder of wonder, the engine spoke to them with a sweet toot. Then it gave off a mild friendly hiss of steam, rasped with irritation at its rust, and started to move forward.

There was something frightening about these monsters. In panic, Drik ripped back upon the throttle he had pushed forward. The engine stopped with a jolt. He and Gus laughed through white lips, and finally found courage to push the throttle forward again. Again they started and again stopped.

The engine had become their slave! It was all very simple!

They ran it up line until the track was blocked. But it took them the whole day to find how to get the engine to go back. They repeated this, shuttling back and forth in high glee. They left the engine late and started home, full of pride and excitement and thinking of the big story they would tell the clan that night. The story was a whopper . . . they even had the engine kneeling to them and giving them its name.

THE WHOLE clan went across town next morning to see Drik and Gus command their new slave for the strange iron monsters had held a fascination for everybody since their discovery. The boy and Drik led the mob cockily down into the railroad yard. But as they approached the place they had left their iron slave, their faces fell. No engine was in evidence! There was only a big hole where the monster had sat, and bits of iron wreckage all around. One of them had done something to the steam valve and the boiler had blown up.

The disheveled wave of laughter beat against their backs. They swore the iron animal had been there last night. Half irritated, half grinning, Pat suggested that they make another animal work then. There were plenty of them around. They could not do this, of course, because no other engine was stoked up.

They spent the next two weeks dodging the rough humor of the clan. Most of this time they spent at the engine yard. The iron thing had worked, and presumably the others would. But it had blown itself to pieces after they left. Drik pondered on this as they stoked up another engine. The monster was dangerous. If they had been in it, they would have been blown to pieces too.

They were very careful in the way they treated this monster. They found there was little water in the tank and remembered what had happened to some of the tanks in the caves when they had not been filled. They spent a day of hard labor filling the monster with barrels and buckets. Then they cleared the fire box and built a new fire, but did not touch any instruments. When the fire was well up and the engine began to softly hiss at times, they let out the throttle and the brake. They experimented thoroughly with these instruments without touching any others. Finally, Drik made careful experiment with the valves. After a time, he noticed that when he turned one to where the queer bugs spelled "Off," water went up in a gage beyond a red mark. The engine began to throb and pound. He turned the valve quickly back, and the gauge dropped, and the engine lost its bad temper.

Drik and Little Gus grinned at each other with pride. They were learning how to go about these things. They spent the rest of that time chugging around the yard. In the course of this, they even learned to use a hand switch.

Pat saw them shuttling back and forth along the river when out on patrol. He watched in amazement. Then he had a smoke signal sent to a tower which relayed the message by mirror back to the citadel. It was a call for the council, and being just as nosey as the world of the past, practically the entire clan streamed across town to watch this sight.

Men's hands itched to get at the controls of an engine and run it themselves. When Pat let out a shout and started down into the yards, the clan broke after him full tilt. They spent the full day getting instruction. But it was so easy, practically no man gave much heed to warnings. Every man felt he could run one of these monsters by "instinct."

Brent thought long about this that night. His mind went forward into the future and probed into the black secrets of the past. In some way he did not understand, he knew that another world had existed here before his. Men, perhaps men like themselves, had made all these things. They had made many things his people did not begin to fathom. They had made a great many things that could be useful when understood, but held great treachery and danger.

Brent then issued his first great edict. Any person desiring to experiment or use any new discovery, was to do so only on permission of the council, under penalty of death. The railroad yards were henceforward taboo.

Drik and Little Gus were given permission to continue study with the trains. But the two on the right of way had piled up and the third had exploded. The incident had taken the edge off their excited interest. Heavy hauling, which was to be the great delay in civilization's rebirth, had been indefinitely put off.

Another winter came without word from

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Ug. Brent felt his absence keenly. Ug's qualities were not to be found in other men. Pat was a fine lieutenant; human, ruthless when need be, reliable, able. But he was a man who needed authority from above. Ug, on the other hand, could come to his own decisions. But he had been gone a long time.

The outstanding development of this winter was the discovery and understanding of how water mains worked. The city mains had been hopelessly destroyed. But now it was discovered that roof tanks could be filled with snow which would melt and supply the piping systems of those buildings. Letting the water run was found too exhausting, and arduous research was made until it was discovered how to shut off valves, saving this precious store of water for the boilers. With furnaces and boilers going, there was heat of sorts, and the boilers did not require the enormous work of refilling every day.

The winter nights were rent with numerous fires in old caves. There was no effective way to fight these. The continual outbreaks finally led to Brent's order, burning out the older sections of the city. They had been breeding places of rats and vermin and disease in any case. The clan did not miss their passing.

In February, the mayor and Scappella and Woof broke a rule and got hold of the forbidden bottles. They got incredibly and delightfully drunk. In the midst of their alcoholic imaginings, they conceived the idea of hooking a donkey engine up with one of the elevators they had not discovered how to use. They managed this, but not too carefully. They were having a whale of a time riding up and down an old loft building when their power cable slipped and dropped them to a smash landing four flights below.

They spent an uncomfortable week in the hospital, more sick with anticipation of what harsh punishment Pat might mete out than with hurt. But Pat's heavy hand failed to fall. For all that, they broke one of the few laws, Brent gave consideration to the fact they had hurt nobody but themselves. Beside, the effects of the bottled lightning did not seem to be always the same. In the original case, the liquor had driven the clan into a drunken frenzy. In this case, it had brought hilarious and harmless good humor, and inspiration.

When the three were well, they came repentantly before Brent. His sentence of punishment left them speechless. They were commanded to get drunk again! Only more so, this time, so that they would make an elevator work that did not fall. By the end of winter, they had four elevators operating in various high caves. These used all the donkey engines they could find.

On the coldest night in the fourth winter, the clan was awakened by the wild beating of alarms. In fear, men rushed to gird on weapons.

But, behold, the bells beat in joy, and not warning!

Across the Hudson, on the heights of the Palisades, burned the seven fires Ug was to give as signal. Frantically, the clan worked to get boats across the island, for commerce with the unfriendly tribes on the Hudson shore had not been established. Boats raced through the treacherous currents. Haw, with his great knowledge of river navigation, supervised the transportation.

As the late winter sun rose over the horizon, Ug and his first contingent stepped upon the island, greeted by mighty cheers. He returned a conquering hero. But, except for a few moments of great joy in greeting Brent and his woman and Pat and friends, he toiled through the day directing his army. Great chunks of ice floated dangerously in the river; there were two accidents early in the day. The job of transportation was not any too easy.

Then, just before sunset, Ug drew up his army and his prisoners and spoils before the citadel, that all might see. And great was his pride and glory. His men were barefoot, and their limbs numb with cold. But they had with them a strange drink that brought warmth and good cheer. They had great amounts of meat carried by forty thousand slaves! They had unknown vegetables and fruits and strange animals that pulled carts, thousands upon thousands of desirable young women and strong young men. Not all the strangers were slaves. Many were friendly clan chieftains, awed by the power and might of Ug's tribe. They had come to pay homage and arrange for their clans to be linked with Brent's. Most of them were farmers, and three had discovered the planting and cultivation of produce.

Ug had been through many cities. But the city tribes had proved surly and savage and not very well fed or intelligent. He had killed them or worked them to death. It was in the country that he had found his most useful captives and friends, although there had been two cities where he had made valuable finds of very advanced tribes. One, a friendly tribe, had discovered the use of kerosene and lamps and knew much of chemicals. They knew the difference between gasoline and kerosene and knew that gasoline was dangerous to have near fire.

His captives and allies were awed by the sights of the metropolis and the richness of the people. They were impressed by the learning of Brent's clan, although some were dumb-

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founded that he had insufficient food and no beasts of burden. Scappella ran a truck before the group. Great was their wonder. But the truck crashed through the snow and stuck in a ravine.

Amid the weeks of rejoicing that followed, Brent talked with the visiting chiefs, showed them his wealth and how his people were taught. He was surprised to notice the importance many of them attached to nails and hammers. He had warehouses full of those!

But not all of the knowledge and showing off was on his side. There was a very small clan, maybe three times ten, whose chief was small with an ivory complexion and black almond eyes. For all the learning of Brent's professors and experts, there were clans present his people had difficulty speaking with. But this small chief with the sing song voice could speak with any one of them fluently, his speech apparently understood by all!

This small individual had once been a laundryman named Woo Sing who spoke pidgin English. In his new life he spoke the equivalent of that to these new guttural tongues. Brent was amazed and fascinated. He put students to studying Woo Sing's tongue so that it could be made the official language of his realm!

Then there was the chief who had a great slave who had discovered the use of saws. Brent had many saws and had found no use for them except to cut them up for various sheet metal purposes. But this great being brought music out of them! Not amateur music, such as was made by the phonographs. But real music that stirred men's souls. The chief made Brent a present of this slave. Brent gave him his freedom upon his training of a full saw orchestra. It was two years before Brent's people found another use for saws as well.

BUT MOST valuable of all Ug's captives were the toolmakers and oyster fishermen, found side by side to the north. The toolmakers could fashion marvelous things of metal. They did not know how to use all of them, but they could make them, and others found their purpose. And on a level with these were the strange people from beside the great inland sea. These folk were very backward in many ways, but they could do anything with one of the machines on wheels. They knew how to take it apart and put it together again, and they knew how to cure its fits and coughs. They had had many autos in their city, but had early run out of gasoline. Now they were thrown into wild excitement, learning of the large supplies of tank gas on hand. Before the winter was out they had changed transportation. About the steam engines they knew nothing. But they offered a better thought. They rigged up an automobile train on flanged wheels. They also aided Drik in finding the use and workings of fire engines, those enormous and fascinating mechanisms painted red. Smith promptly confiscated all pump and hose wagons to use in giving mass baths.

Then there were Ug's choice of his most valuable captives, the brown skinned, silent men he had found on the western plains. These were a highly advanced race putting Brent's white clan to shame. They had not suffered from starvation or disease at all, and they were filled with self sufficiency. They knew how to dig roots that were edible and how to catch fish in numerous ways. They knew how to make wild horses and dogs work.

They were expert with bow and arrow and spear, and they could make fire from wood and also from stones. Ug had found them living in caves of animal hide. Brent thought about this with a touch of jealousy. What one of his people would have thought to catch an animal and first work it to death, then eat it, then use its skin for a warm cave and clothes? They knew very little about machinery, but seemed to care less. He wondered with misgivings of his own clan's superiority if these Indians were some super race that had passed beyond the state of machine savagery.

All of these chiefs stayed until spring. Each day was busy with interchange of the things they had learned and things they did not know. Many of them were superior to Brent's clan in various ways. But in these things he was far and away ahead, and they admired him with proper awe: his government, his educational system, his orderly plan of gathering knowledge, and his money. No other clan had thought of money. A great many had found it, but they had simply used it for ornaments and melted it up and made it into other objects.

At last, spring came. The visiting chiefs returned to their own people. They took teachers from Brent's clan with them, and left many of their own people to study. They desired to become part of Brent's clan because he had things to offer which they needed. This was an attitude that coercion could not have equalled. They promised food and loyalty and certain regular loan of workers in exchange for luxuries from the city, for education, for assurance of protection when needed.

They left in small friendly groups, but immediately the savage cannibal tribes across the Hudson made raids on the small parties. Pat, Ug and See led their warriors against the Jersey clans, overtaking and annihilating thou-

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sands in the course of a two month campaign. They saw it would be necessary to set up a series of forts to connect them with their outlying clans.

For three years they fortified the roadways, leaving strong outposts in the hands of reliable leaders. They found many factories for things for which they had use. Gasoline refineries, rubber plants, great chemical industries. But they had not yet reached the point where they could operate these complex plants. Using gasoline and rubber daily, they still did not know what either was.

The army and the research and the hygiene departments became professions of glory and much prestige. In every branch of work, a desire for learning and increased skill were fundamental forces. When methods or an idea or thoughts proved obsolete, a meeting of all concerned was called. The matter was put up for argument, its pros and cons discussed, and if the matter was outworn, it was simply junked.

Nobody ever put forward the plea that such a way of doing something was good enough for his father and it was good enough for him. Nobody who knew his parents had grown up yet! No customs, except basic ones, such as cooking and hygiene, ever got embedded. They had no chance. Rivalry was keen and the fortunes of life swift. The only test of a man was, could he do, or improve the jobs?

At the end of three years, Hirsh had learned to read well. He became immersed in a study of the Inca people, and found their civilization almost parallel with his, except they had no machines. Thereafter, he read many newspapers of Goddard's time, and decided the people of Goddard's period had been savages of low mentality. They seemed belligerently rutted in stupidity and an inability to meet conditions.

This one example gave him chuckles for weeks. Goddard's people had been starving in the cities and the government had been bribing people right outside to kill their animals and destroy their corn! As far as Hirsch could see, the government was trying to kill off the city people. Then there had been this very city of New York. It had grown so big and expensive to live in that the government had to build enormous tunnels and bridges at terrific cost so that the poor people could get out of the city to work and earn enough to still live in the city and half starve. It got worse instead of better for them after that because the tunnels and bridges in some fashion cost them still more money!

They had been very confusing times to Hirsch. Talking them over with other students, he came to the conclusion the world had been steadily sinking into savagery since the Dark Ages. The simple matter of all the rooms of history books in the library showed people's confusion. Why thousands where one would serve?

In this year, the ninth of Brent's rule, civilization had been re-established. There was still an enormous amount to learn, but now the means for learning had been provided. Everybody under Brent's rule was assured a minimum living and education and skilled teaching in any craft they chose. It varied according to locality, but it was being levelled out, and each leveling was higher. The laws were harsh, but they were few and any intelligent citizen knew them all. When they became obsolete, they were junked completely.

The more Brent's people learned of the confusion of the preceding world, the more they held toward simplicity. Nothing was ever considered established. The basis of economy was that the individual owned whatever he produced or made and the government owned everything else. But even this early, Brent pursued the system of using that ownership merely to avoid private bickerings and feuds and to provide a State income.

Commerce and friendliness flowed in all Brent's nation. Food coming in from the country, luxuries going out from the city. Transportation became a leading industry, and great grew the men in that field and the field of barter. Paradoxically, Brent had money printed, acceptable in exchange throughout the nation, long before his people knew how to make the paper it was printed upon. Scappella, with Hitt and Drik, and the heating experts, studied the railroad trains on the Jersey shore, eventually learning to fire and operate an engine properly. With great joy and trepidation, they started forth in the direction of Buffalo with a trainload of huskies to clear the tracks. Months later, they returned afoot. They had landed up near Boston, terrifying a rural clan into complete flight. The train broke down and they could not repair iron and steel.

Brent again felt the need of a younger man to lead his clan. Ug had grown with his experiences, and had became less rash and acquired great breadth of vision and planning and foresight. Yet Pat remained the real idol of the people.

In the third summer after Ug's return, Brent called a meeting of all the near-by tribes, asked them who they would like for a leader. There was great excitement and much talking. Ug was the man. But Pat was loved—there was hesitation. Pat himself settled the point by walking over and raising Ug's hand. A mighty roar of satisfaction and appreciation rose from

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the people. More than ever, Pat was loved and respected. Ug flashed him a quick look of understanding and thanks. Brent smiled, presented Ug with his most valuable possession —a silver bugle.

Shortly after, Little Gus left for a visit to the farthest tribe. It was a great experience, going to visit a tribe that lived near a city of sunshine and sweet fruits, far far away, four months if one walked long and fast; four months of tremendous experience, of great muddy rivers, of hot blazing plains, of mountains taller by far than the buildings of his city, a great woods and strange animals.

The party left with a wagon train of luxuries, groaning, creaking wagons pulled by horses and oxen. They could not risk lacking gasoline for cars; and railroads only operated short distances. Its members talked mostly by sign language, but carried automatic rifles and traveled over concrete roads as smooth as the tires of their wagons. Some of the people had come originally from the distant clan and boasted a great deal of the weather in their part of the country.

They talked, too, of the tremendous groundshake which had toppled buildings and killed off more than two-thirds of their clan. On the road, they passed many wagons of incoming produce and herds of cattle being driven to the city for slaughter. Gus did his first business, bartering a chunk of worthless gold, no larger than his fist, for a large bag of valuable salt.

TEN YEARS, fraught with activity and adventure, passed swiftly by. Little Gus was wiry and hard with outdoor life and military campaigns; wise with bartering and dealing with new tribes and chieftains.

Brent's domain now extended throughout all the North American continent. There were still savage tribes not under his rule. But they were few. The use and mining of coal had been discovered. There was no more slavery; but at the age of sixteen every man gave three years of service to the clan. Work in mines was rotated in three month shifts, due to its unhealthiness and danger. Railroad trains ran over unconnected stretches of track. Complicated switches and spur lines had not yet been rebuilt. Steamships ran up and down the coasts, but could not be repaired.

Oddly, although the Panama Canal had been crossed by land, no ship had run through its length. The fortification systems had been extended in every direction. The army was the police force of the land, under rigid control, with highest integrity and honor. Capital punishment was meted out for most crimes and for insanity and hopeless illness.

Great tales of the changes within New York came to Gus, but he could not vision their reality. He was sent for by Ug. Brent was nearing death, and desired to see him.

Across the long, hard-surfaced highway, Gus traveled east. He was mounted on a horse and wore leather leggings and moccasins. He headed a train carrying meat and grain and nuts and dyes and strange, beautiful woods. He noted that the roads should be repaired. He passed through many cities and towns where his fame had gone before him, and he was feted as a hero. He came upon one uprising, joined in subduing the rebels. Defeated, they told their story. Singe, in New York, owed them money, had refused to pay. They had sent word to Ug many times, but never had an answer. Gus knew that they merited death. Yet their complaint seemed just, if true. He took the leader of the defeated tribe to explain his own case.

Truly, the changes to his own city were great. He came upon the banks of the Hudson in early fall, looked across to see a city splotched with squares of color. A swift ferry carried him across. Every other block along the river front was a park, filled with green grass, ablaze with flowers. The city itself had been thoroughly cleaned, all falling structures demolished, the streets cleared, and the city dotted with parks. Trees grew along streets that had not known a tree for a hundred years. Autos ran beneath their shade, and happy, healthy people looked from windows before which were window boxes of bright-hued flowers.

The autos ran slowly, upon tires of solid webs of rope, for rubber tires had long since rotted, and their manufacture was a lost art. But the refining of gasoline had recommenced this year. Ug met him with great ceremony. He was proud of Gus, proud of his military achievements in the Far West and his loyalty. He listened to the story of the rebel chieftain. He had never received a message! He would trace the trouble, punish the culprits with death. In the meantime, let the chief keep his secret and enjoy the city. There were restaurants where he could eat at no cost. They were kept by the government. He would be given rooms, and whatever he desired would be supplied by Ug.

But it was the learning of the people that most surprised Gus. They had learned to make many articles, and could now read a great deal. Although their spoken vocabulary was still limited to less than a thousand words, they had discovered the use of the dictionary and encyclopedia. Hitt was working on a history of civilization prior to the great catastrophe.

They knew something of the history of

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Brent and Goddard, for they had deciphered the daily papers of that time. They knew that electricity could run engines. But they could not fathom the mystery of what electricity was. They had some new laws, but each year all laws were revised in keeping with their progress.

They were now trying to work out a system of education so that every child would be educated half in the country, half in the city. At the end of that time, he could choose his own calling. He might work on for the government or live on the land; or the government would help him to start in business. However, Ug thought it advisable that the theoretical status of slavery remain so that a valuable man might at any time be called for service to his chief. The system of tribute was showing defects. Shortly, a system of percentage taxation would be inaugurated.

Gus was overcome with the progress and with Ug's friendly attitude. He was taken to Brent and given a great dinner at which he saw many old familiar faces and many new ones. He learned to his amazement that he was credited with the quiet peacefulness of his own section of the country and the orderly way in which its government was run. He gathered that he was to be placed in a high position, near to Ug. Brent was old; he was nearing death. He wanted to see the grown boy who once had shown such useful curiosity in the city, and later had helped to settle the Far West.

Brent himself took Gus about the city, showed him the many changes and explained their cause. The students had learned that long ago, in the previous civilization, the country had been filled with wealth, but people had starved for want of work. Brent wished to see nothing like that ever happen to his people. The essentials of living should be supplied to all. He looked into the future, foresaw the day when electricity would again be found and the land hum to fast transportation, commerce, and history.

There would be troubles, but Gus must remember that all authority was vested in the state. It would not do to divide the responsibility. Already, the clan had had its lesson in allowing laws to become obsolete. They must be revised annually, in step with the times. Those breaking laws maliciously and purposely must be punished. The race must be kept strong, healthy, happy, prosperous, and no man's selfishness allowed to interfere with the people's rights.

Brent spoke of Singe and grimaced. He made Gus know that Singe was to be the first example of dangers of civilization. Gus spoke about the flowers and parks. Brent smiled. It had been his idea, his last gesture to his people. And they had been happier with green and trees and flowers.

With the first fall of snow and strangling of transportation, Singe came into the limelight. He was rich, had waxed powerful through his wealth. Long before, he had hoarded away mattresses. Of late, they had become the most-prized luxury to the country people. He had bargained shrewdly and, as a result, cornered meat. He now charged such prohibitive prices that none but the wealthy could afford to buy. He was haled before Ug, refused to reduce his prices, claimed he had earned the right to charge what he wished, had been of tremendous aid to the progress of commerce. He had many supporters, particularly among the traders.

Ug heard him to the end; then, with great simplicity, told him that all food belonged to the government and therefore to the people when necessary. It was now necessary. If he would reduce his prices to where the people could buy, well and good. If not, the government would do so for him.

Singe looked about and saw he had many friends among the throng. Blinded by his wealth, he thought he could challenge Ug. He made that clear in no uncertain terms. Ug made a gesture to Pat. With lightning speed, Pat stepped over, beheading Singe where he stood. The other traders murmured, paled as Pat looked coldly in their direction.

Brent smiled wearily. He had seen a great and fundamental law established, a law that no man for personal gain may cause the people to suffer. The next day he called all the clan together, told them to heed the leadership of Ug and those who came after, warned Ug not to insist on holding power too long, patted Hum and Eee and Pat and Mrs. Cosgrave and See in a friendly way. Then he died—a much-loved, wise old man who had led his people back to civilization, who had atoned for past lack of judgment in a different life.

Deep sadness marked his passing, and his few simple laws of life and civilization had a new force. For in his death the people realized the greatness of their first chieftain, who years before had given his power to a younger man, yet who continued to think and guide wisely the destinies of his people.

The following summer, a great bird appeared in the sky. Ug's clan knew what it was. There were many such birds over in Brooklyn and in Jersey, but experiment with them was forbidden. They wondered if it was the man who years before had gotten into one and flown away.

The bird circled long over the city, finally swooped down and landed in the park. Two

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beings stepped forth. They were highly excited and somewhat amused. Simply, one made it clear that he was Goddard, who, long years before, had left the city by plane. The people were surprised. They knew something of this man's history.

Led before Ug, he brought great news. He had a very complicated speech, could convey ideas to others rapidly. He explained that he could teach others to speak likewise. He brought forth a strange mechanism, had the room darkened and the wall cleared. He showed talking movies!

Great was his learning. He knew electricity and how to make it. He knew in detail of a great many things which Ug's people knew only vaguely. And greatest of all, he brought films and books explaining many great mysteries in simplest form. Civilization, a civilization of power and steam, of culture and complicated chemicals, was about to return, to the million people remaining alive in America!

But the great question in his mind was not yet answered. The diary he had found and learned to read in his secret laboratory had told of his reasons for gambling the misery of the world to set it free. Now he wondered if he had been successful. Wondered, too, if he was *surely* Goddard. There had been seven in that laboratory and four had survived. Perhaps Goddard was one of those other men.

Now at the banquet he searched faces for some spark of recognition of those few friends mentioned in his diary. For a moment, his gaze lingered upon Drik who seemed to have won high honor here. Drik smiled at him, but there was no real recognition.

At the finish of the banquet, the girl, Hum, had her favorite piano brought in. Sitting far away she played as she had never played before. Years of pent-up love, of pathos and new happiness, rippled and swelled from her finger tips.

At the end, a deep hush hung over the gathering. Softly, she moved toward the two strangers, neared with a deep light in her eyes. Goddard breathed quickly. She had stopped and was looking from one to the other.

Then as mist floats across the moor she came forward without hesitation into his arms.

Suddenly, the great loneliness of years lifted from his shoulders. Embraced, he knew that it was not what happened to the nation or to ancient beliefs or to the world that had mattered since the day memory began again.

It was this girl . . . this instinct of the human race to rise and live and love despite all obstacles. In this love he found proof that he was really Goddard . . . and that deep within man's being *he had not changed.* ■ ■ ■

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

THE GRAY MAHATMA

By Talbot Mundy

Drawn into the merciless tides of power that held fast the heart of the East, two fearless men matched modern cunning against the pagan magic of a hundred centuries. The lovely sorceress Yasmini laughed as she and the dread Mahatma vied to see who would first entrap them in the vortex of their inexorable forces. . . .

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MONSIEUR SEEKS A WIFE

By Margaret Irwin

Lovely as the springtime, in the deep mysterious forest of the ancient Juras, they waited the arrival of the unsuspecting bridegroom. Three sisters—one offering life, one bitter frustration, and one strange and unearthly death. . . .

Note.—The following story is an extract from the private memoirs of Monsieur de St. Aignan, a French nobleman living in the first half of the eighteenth century.

I WAS twenty-four years of age when I returned in 1723 at the end of my three years' sojourn at the English Court, and had still to consider the question of my marriage. My father sent for me soon after my return and asked if I had yet given any thought to the matter. I replied that as a dutiful son I had felt it would be unnecessary and impertinent to do so. My father was sitting in his gown without his wig, for the day was hot, and as he sipped his chocolate he kept muttering, "Too good—too good by half."

I flicked my boots with my whip and did my best to conceal my impatience, for there was a hunt in the woods at Meudon and I feared I might miss it.

Presently he said, "There was no one in England with whom you might have wished to form an alliance?"

"No, sir. The English actresses are charming."

This time he seemed better pleased for he repeated, "Good, good. That is an admirable safeguard to your filial duty in marriage."

He then threw me over a letter from an old friend of his, the Comte de Riennes, a man of little fortune but of one of the oldest families in the kingdom. I skimmed two pages of compliments and salutations which seemed tedious to me after the shorter style of English correspondence, and got to the body of the letter. It was in answer to a proposal from my father that the two houses should be united by my marriage with one of the three daughters of the Comte.

He expressed warmly his gratitude and pleasure and told my father that as he had only enough fortune to bestow a *dot* on one of his daughters, the two others would enter a convent as soon as their sister was married; the choice of the bride he very magnanimously left to my father, and my father with equal magnanimity now left it to me. As I had seen and heard of none of them, I was perfectly indifferent.

"My motives are entirely disinterested," I said to my father. "I only wish to make a match that will be in accordance with your wishes and those of such an old friend of the family as Monsieur le Comte de Riennes. We had better therefore refer the choice back to him."

As I said this, I turned the last page of the letter, and saw that Monsieur le Comte suggested that I should pay a visit to the Château de Riennes in the country of the Juras and see the three daughters for myself before deciding which I should marry. The generosity of this offer struck me forcibly and I at once accepted it. My father also remarked on the openness and liberality of his old friend, and observed that as in the usual course the eldest would have been appointed to the marriage, it would show justice and delicacy in me to

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I saw vaguely before me in the mist a vast circle of apparently human figures. . . .

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choose her, unless of course she had a hump back or some other deformity; "though in that case," he remarked, "she would surely have been placed in a convent long before."

I went out to find that I was too late for the hunt at Meudon. It was the Regent[1] who informed me of this, for I met him strolling up and down one of the corridors in the palace and gaping out of the windows for all the world like an idle lacquey. He was then very near the end of his life, though he was not old, and I remember being struck by his bloated aspect and thinking to myself, "If that man should have a fit, I would not bet a button on his life."

He did me the honour to ask me many questions about England, especially the rapid advance of scientific discovery in which he took a great interest.

"How times have changed!" he remarked. "When I was young, I was regarded as a monster and a poisoner because I was an atheist and dabbled in chemistry. Also in black magic; it was the fashion then," he added. "One must have some superstition, though I dare say you find it inconsistent to discard the superstition of religion, yet to retain that of sorcery."

As he liked nothing so much as plain speaking, I owned to this, and added in explanation that in England the superstition of magic had for some time been confined to the ignorant and vulgar.

He then remarked on my approaching marriage (for my father had spoken of it to him) and, turning back just as he was leaving me, he said, "The French Juras were a dangerous country once. Take care of yourself there."

His voice always sounded as though he were joking, but his melancholy and bloodshot eyes looked serious. I knew that a savage country like the Juras was likely to be infested with robbers, but I should ride well attended and said so. The Regent only smiled, and it suddenly struck me as he walked away that the danger he was thinking of was not connected with robbers, and I could not guess what it was. I did not see him again before his sudden death, and three days later I set out on my journey.

The roads were bad and the inns worse, and I thought with regret of England, which seemed, especially at the worst inn, to be my adopted country. After an endless and dreary plain cultivated by wretched peasantry, I saw the rugged shapes of the Jura mountains against the sky and knew I was reaching my journey's end. The next day our horses were toiling steadily uphill, and the road was rougher, the countryside more deserted than ever. We entered a forest of dark pine trees which shed a gloomy twilight over our path, for it could now only by courtesy be termed a road. I began to be certain that we had missed our way, when I saw a creature approaching us who seemed to be human more from his upright position on two legs than from anything else in his appearance. I asked if we were on the road for Riennes, and though we had the greatest difficulty in understanding his dialect, it was at last clear that we were. He seemed, however, to be warning us not to take the wrong path farther on, and walked back a little way in order, I supposed, to direct us.

I dropped him some money for his trouble and he then repeated his warnings with what struck me as extraordinary urgency and even anxiety. He talked faster and more unintelligibly until the only word I could be certain of was the continual repetition of the name "Riennes," and he wagged his shaggy beard and rolled his eyes as he said it, with an expression that seemed positively that of fear or horror. I concluded that he was probably half-witted, and threw him another coin to get rid of him. At this he laid hold on my bridle and said two or three times, very slowly and as distinctly as he could. "Do not go to Riennes."

Convinced by now that the fellow was mad, I struck his hand off my bridle and rode on.

We came out of the forest to find ourselves surrounded by dark hills that rose sharply from the ground in jagged and hideous shapes. Their slopes were bare and uncultivated and many of their summits were crowned with frowning rocks. As I rode through this desolate and miserable country, a deep depression settled on me. I had for some time been feeling the regrets that most young men experience when the time comes for them to arrange their affairs and decide on marriage.

I was not yet sufficiently advanced in age or experience to consider youth and innocence the most attractive qualities in woman. But these would probably be the only charms in the raw country girl I was to marry, besides good health and perhaps rustic beauty.

I had heard much of the unutterable tedium of the lives of the smaller nobility on their country estates, a tedium only to be surpassed by the monotony of the religious life, which poverty enforces so large a proportion of our daughters and younger sons to enter.

Incongruously enough, I wondered at the same moment whether the eldest sister had red hands, and could have wept when it occurred to me that they might be no monopoly but general to all.

[1]Duke of Orleans, Regent of France during the minority of Louis XV.

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I thought with longing of my life and friends in London, of supper parties I had given on the stage, graced by the incomparable Mrs. Barry, the admirable Mrs. Bracegirdle, of the company at White's coffee-house where the conversation was often as good as in Mr. Congreve's comedies, of discussions on politics, philosophy, science, between men of wit and reason. But the melancholy that had now fastened on me was deeper than mere regret, and I could neither account for it nor shake it off.

We had to ask the way to Riennes more than once, and it struck me that the people who directed us showed more than the usual astonishment and awe natural to the peasant in an uncivilized country when suddenly confronted by a noble stranger and his retinue. In fact they seemed to show definite fear, amounting sometimes even to terror, so that I was inclined to think that the old Comte must be a harsh and cruel lord to his people.

TOWARDS evening we entered a gorge where our path went uphill between precipitous slopes and vast overhanging crags of dark rock. They were huger and more horrid than anything I could have imagined, and in the stormy twilight (for the clouds hung low and completely covered the taller hills) they presented an aspect that would have been terrifying to a weak and apprehensive imagination. We seemed no bigger than flies as our horses crawled up the steep ascent. A beetling crag overhung our path, and as I turned the sharp corner that it made, my mare suddenly reared and backed so violently that I was nearly thrown.

I urged her on with all my force and as I did so I glanced up and saw that what must have frightened her was the figure of a girl standing on the slope of the hill some way above us. She stood so still that at first glance she would have been indistinguishable from the rocks that surrounded her, had it not been for her long pale hair that the wind was blowing straight forward round her face. She wore a wreath of pale lilac and blue flowers, and I could just seize a glimpse of eyes that seemed the same colour as the flowers, set in a white face, before her hair blew past and hid it completely.

That glance was all I could give, for my mare was rearing and plunging in a manner utterly foreign to her usual behaviour. Suddenly, however, she stood quite still, trembling and bathed in sweat. I seized the opportunity to look up again, but the figure had gone. So still had she been while there, and so suddenly had she disappeared, that for an instant I doubted my senses and wondered if my eyes had played me some trick in that dim confusion of lights and shadows. But my impression of her had been too vivid for this doubt to last; I could even recollect the dark dress she wore, plainly cut like a peasant's. Yet I could not think of her as peasant, nor as a person of quality. She seemed some apparition from another world, and though I laughed at myself for my romantic fancy, I defy the most reasonable phisolopher not to have shared it if he had seen her as I did. My mare certainly appeared to hold my opinion and with the greater conviction of terror, for she sidled most ridiculously past the place where the girl had stood, and was sweating and shivering as I rode her on. And what struck me as still more peculiar, all my men had some difficulty in getting their horses to pass that spot.

Half an hour later we were free of that hideous gorge, and could see the towers of the Château de Riennes pointing upwards above the fir trees on the hill before us. Relief at reaching the end of my journey fought with an apprehension I could not understand. I remember an attempt at reassurance by telling myself, "If my wife plagues me, I can leave her on my estates in St. Aignan, and spend my time in London and Paris." But even this reflection failed to encourage me.

We clattered into the courtyard to be met with acclamations from grooms and the lacqueys who hurried forward to take our horses. The Comte himself came out to the steps of the château and stood awaiting me. He embraced me warmly and led me into the lighted hall with many expressions of welcome and friendship. He looked a much older man than I had expected in a contemporary of my father's, and his mild blue eyes certainly gave me no impression of the sternness I had anticipated from the timid behaviour of the peasantry.

Indeed there was a certain timidity in his own bearing, a weakness and vacillation in all his movements, as though he lived in continual and fearful expectation. But this did not in any way detract from the courtesy and cordiality of his reception of me and I might not have remarked it had I not been prepared for such a different bearing.

He led me to my room to remove the stains of travel and arrange my dress before being presented to the ladies of his family. Though early in the autumn the weather was cold, and a bright fire of pine logs blazed in my chimney. It was a relief to be sitting in a decent room once more, to have my riding-boots pulled off at last, and to put on a peruke that had been freshly curled and scented.

My valet was a useful fellow and soon

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effected a satisfactory change in my appearance. I put on a suit of maroon-coloured velvet with embroidered satin waistcoat which I flattered myself set off my figure to advantage, and as I arranged my Mechlin ruffles before a very fine mirror, my gloomy apprehensions lifted, and it was with quite a pleasurable excitement that I looked forward to making the choice of my bride. I laughed at myself for my certainty that one or all would have ugly hands, and reflected that I should probably find a very good, pretty sort of girl and one that in this lonely place was not likely to be entirely unsusceptible.

Madame la Comtesse awaited me in a vast salon of a style that would have been old-fashioned in the time of our grandfathers. The huge carved chair in which she sat, raised on a dais in semi-royal fashion at the end of the room, only served to make her appear the more insignificant. Her grey head was bowed, her long knotted fingers hung limply over the arms of her chair. But when she rose to greet me it was with the regal dignity that I remember my mother had told me quite old ladies had had in the days of her youth, a dignity that passed out of fashion with the late Queen Regent,[1] and is never seen now.

I was shocked, however, at the vacant yet troubled expression in her dim grey eyes. She certainly did not look as old as the Comte, nor could she, I knew from what my father had told me, be far past the period of middle life. Yet her mind seemed feeble and wandering as in extreme age.

She made me sit on a stool beside her chair and strove to entertain me with a courtesy that could still charm, though I could perceive very plainly the effort that it cost her. Every now and then she would stoop to caress a great white cat that rubbed against her chair and make some remark to it or to me concerning it.

I did my best to make friends with the favourite, but I do not like cats, and this beast regarded me with a distant and supercilious air, impervious to all my advances though it never took its pale green eyes off my face. This persistent stare irritated me till I longed to kick it out of the room, and foolishly this irritation somehow prevented me accommodating myself as well as I might have done to my hostess' tentative and desultory conversation.

It was a relief as well as an excitement when Mademoiselle de Riennes and Mademoiselle Marie de Riennes were announced. A tall girl entered the room with her arm around a slight childish figure whose face was almost hidden against her sister's sleeve. The elder received my salutations with a certain amount of grace and finish, the younger with such confusion of shyness that in kindness I withdrew my eyes from her as soon as possible.

I was too anxious to see the elder to be able to see very clearly at first, but I perceived that she was neither ugly nor foolish and the hand I was permitted to kiss was of a good shape and colour. Later as we talked I saw that there were certain points in her face and figure that might be called beautiful. Her olive complexion lacked colour, but that could be easily remedied. She had large dark eyes of a very fine shape, a well-formed bust and shoulders, a pretty mouth with good teeth, an excellent forehead and charming little ears. Yet the whole did not somehow make for beauty. It was incomplete or perhaps marred in some way.

It is diffcult to perceive the habitual expression of a young girl who is anxious to please, but I thought that the quick interest and smiles with which she attended to my conversation with her mother were not natural to her, and that from time to time a look of sullen and even fierce brooding would settle on her face, though momentarily, for the next instant she would rouse herself and seem to push it away.

Whenever I could do so without increasing her confusion, I stole a look at the younger daughter. She, undoubtedly, was possessed of beauty, of a fair, almost infantile order; her lips were full and red and remained always just parted, her face was an exquisitely rounded oval, and her light-brown hair curled naturally on the nape of her neck in tendrils as soft and shining as those of a very young child. But she was extremely unformed, and I could not but feel that in spite of my vague disappointment in the elder, it was she who was in most respects the more suitable for my purpose.

After allowing sufficient time for her to compose herself, I addressed some simple remark to Mademoiselle Marie that should have been perfectly easy to answer. She looked at me with an uncertain, almost an uncomprehending expression in her blue eyes that reminded me of her mother's, and stammered a few words unintelligibly. Her extreme timidity was perhaps natural to her youth and upbringing, but I thought I detected a vacancy and weakness of mind in her manner of showing it.

"Decidedly," I told myself, "this one is best fitted for the convent," and after answering my remark myself as though I had but intended to continue it, I addressed myself again to the eldest. She replied very suitably and prettily and I thought her manners would not be amiss in any salon in London or Paris.

[1] Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV and Regent of France during his minority.

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We continued happily therefore in a conversation which if not exactly amusing was at least satisfactory and promising, when an absurdly small incident occurred that proved oddly disconcerting to Mademoiselle.

THE CAT, which had so far continued to reserve its obnoxious gaze for me, suddenly walked across to her stool, looking up in her face and mewing. She shrank back with an involuntary shudder. It was not this that startled me, for I knew many people have an unconquerable aversion to cats and I have seen the great and manly Duc de Noailles turn faint at the Council Board because the little King[1] carried in a kitten. But what surprised me in Mademoiselle de Riennes was the same backward, fearful glance that I had seen in her father, as though she dreaded, not the cat itself, but some unseen horror behind her. The next moment, however, she was replying naturally and with no more than a becoming hesitation to some remark I had addressed to her.

I wondered why the third daughter had not appeared, and the same wonder seemed to be disturbing my hostesses for they looked continually towards the door. Madame la Comtesse remarked two or three times, "My daughter is late"; it was odd that she should so speak of her youngest daughter instead of reserving the expression for Mademoiselle de Riennes. She started violently when the footman anounced, "Mademoiselle Claude de Riennes," and the eldest daughter leaned suddenly forward as though she would speak to me. She did not, but she fixed on me a look of such agonised entreaty that it arrested me as I rose, so that I did not turn on the instant, as I should have done, to greet Mademoiselle Claude.

When I did, I had to wait a full minute or two before I could recover sufficient composure to address her as I ought. Mademoiselle Claude was the girl I had seen on the rocky hillside. Her smooth and shining hair was dressed high in the prevailing fashion, her hooped dress of pearl-coloured satin was suitable to her rank, yet I was certain that she was the same as that wild figure I had seen, with hair blown straight before her face.

What further startled me was that I found that until that moment I had not really believed the apparition on the hillside to be a human creature. It was a disturbing discovery for a man of sense, living in an age of science and reason, to make in himself. I had certainly never before been guilty of imagining that I had seen a spirit.

I could only conclude that the peculiar gliding grace with which she advanced and curtsied to me did indeed connect her with the nymphs of mountain and grove in classic lore, and considered how I should turn a compliment to her on the subject without exposing to her family how I had met her in that strange fashion.

To my astonishment, however, she said in answer to her mother's introduction, "I have already seen Monsieur de St. Aignan," but no surprise was shown by mother or sisters. Mademoiselle Claude's voice was low and very soft, it had a quality in it that I have not met in any other voice and that I do not know how to describe; I should perhaps do so best if I said that it seemed to purr.

She sat beside her mother and did not speak again; her eyes were downcast and her long pale lashes, only less pale than her skin, languished on her cheek; her face was small and round, ending in a sharply pointed little chin. She wore in her bosom a bunch of the same light lilac and blue flowers that had been in her hair when I had first seen her, and the peculiarity of wearing such a simple posy when in full dress, caught my attention.

I asked their names, hoping to hear her speak again, but she only smiled, and it was the eldest daughter who told me that they were wild flowers, harebells and autumn crocuses, and that the latter with their long white stems and faintly purple heads were called Naked Ladies by the shepherd folk. Mademoiselle Claude raised her head as her sister spoke and handed me one to see. Her eyes looked full into mine for an instant and again I could not be certain if their pale colour were more like the blue or the lilac flowers, and again the compliment that rose to my lips evaded me before I could speak it.

The cat had deserted the chair of Madame la Comtesse and was rubbing backwards and forwards against Medamoiselle Claude, at last taking its eyes off my face and staring up at its young mistress. It was evident that she had no share of her sister's aversion to cats. Suddenly it leapt up on to her shoulder and rubbed its head against her long slim throat. Madame de Riennes stroked her daughter's head and that of the cat. "They are both so white, so white," she murmured, and then, speaking I supposed to me, though she did not appear to be addressing anyone, she said, "The moon shone on my daughter when she was born."

I was embarrassed how to reply, for these disconnected remarks seemed to indicate premature senility more clearly than anything she had yet said. Fortunately at this moment the Comte entered and we went to supper.

[1]Louis XV.

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I sat of course between my hostess and Mademoiselle de Riennes whom I wished to engage again in conversation. But her former ease seemed to have departed, she answered me with embarrassment and sometimes with positive stupidity. She now avoided meeting my eyes and looked repeatedly across the table to where her sisters sat opposite. I could not be sure which of the two she was looking at, for both sat silent with their eyes downcast.

The rest of the evening was spent in the salon, where Madame la Comtesse requested her daughters to show me some of the results of the labours that filled their days. Mademoiselle de Riennes led me to a tapestry frame that struck me as the most perfect exhibition of tedium that could be devised. Mademoiselle Marie showed me a Book of Hours that she was illuminating; my admiration was reserved for the fair fingers that pointed out their work. If the hands of Mademoiselle de Riennes were good, the hands of Mademoiselle Marie were delicious, not so fine in shape, but softly rounded, helpless, and dimpled like a baby's. I began to wonder if I might not have judged hastily of her parts. Though the second in age, she appeared the youngest of the three; she was evidently slow in development, and who could tell but that after marriage had placed her in a suitable position, she might become the most brilliant as well as the most beautiful of all?

Politeness obliged me to turn at last to Mademoiselle Claude who was sitting as still as ever, with hands folded in her lap, and ask what she had to show me.

"Nothing, Monsieur," said she, smiling, but without looking up.

"Mademoiselle is so idle?" I asked, hoping to tease her into a glance. But I did not win it, and at that moment Madame de Riennes suggested we should dance. It proved impossible as the daughters did not know the modern fashion of dancing and I knew no other. Madame de Riennes sat at the harpsichord and played an old-fashioned air to which her two elder daughters danced a *pas de deux*. I was surprised to see that again Mademoiselle Claude did not perform, and asked her if she did not like dancing.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur," she replied, in that soft purring voice of hers, "I like it very well."

"Then do you not care to dance with two or three?"

"Monsieur is right, I prefer to dance with many."

"Then, Mademoiselle, you can have but few opportunities for dancing here where I should imagine balls are a rarity. Do you not find it very dull?"

"No, Monsieur, I do not find it dull."

All the time she seemed to be smiling, though as I was standing above her and her face remained lowered, I could not well see. The hands that lay so still in her lap were like the long white stems of the flowers she wore with the ridiculous name—they were so slim and bloodless. As I looked at them I felt an unaccountable wish to draw away from them. I could in no way explain it; I have felt a repulsion to hands before now, but to none that were beautiful. But I decided quickly that it was only an absurd fancy that likened them in my mind to hands of the dead, and so still and white they were that this was not surprising.

WHEN the dance was finished, Madame de Riennes rose from the harpsichord and patted Mademoiselle Claude's cheek.

"My daughter can sing and play," she said. "She sits so still, too still, but she can sing very well."

Mademoiselle Claude fetched her lute. As she sat with the instrument on her knee, her limp fingers plucking idly at the strings, I thought to myself, "She is the last I would choose to be the mother of my heirs." There seemed nothing alive about her, from her dead hair, so nearly white, to her pale and smiling lips. In the corner of the wainscot where she sat, her pearl-coloured skirts spread round her and reflected on the polished floor, she had the appearance of a moonlit cloud, possessing no doubt a certain strange beauty but more as a picture than a woman.

She began to sing; I did not think a great deal of her voice, having heard better, but it had a certain charm, being low, caressing and of a peculiar timbre. She sang an air from an opera now out of date, and then a song in which the tune was unlike any other I had ever heard. It was very simple and had a certain gaiety, it seemed to follow no known rules of method and harmony. There were two or three notes that recurred again and again like a call, and the melody between moved backwards and forwards as in the movement of a dance.

It seemed older than any other music, I cannot say why, unless it was that as I listened, my imagination conjured up visions of sacrificial dances performed in the most ancient times of Greece or Egypt. While in England, I had stayed at a country house whose owner had had the humour to take an interest in the old songs and ballads of his countryside and even to profess to admire them. He had played some of them to me one evening when he had tired of the cards, and I could not but admit that there was something in their rude simplicity that pleased the ear.

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They were for the most part wild and plaintive, frequently unutterably dismal. But old as they had sounded, this tune that Mademoiselle Claude was singing seemed infinitely older. There was nothing plaintive in its wildness. It belonged to an age when men had not yet learned to regret, to distinguish between good and evil, to encumber themselves with the million hindrances and restrictions that separate men from beasts.

A strange restlessness and discontent seized on me. I felt a ridiculous but none the less powerful loathing of my condition, of the condition of all men in this dull world, of the morals and customs that force our lives into a monotonous pattern from the cradle to the grave, of the very clothes I wore, stiff and cumbrous, crowned with a heavy peruke of false hair. I longed to fling them all off and shake myself free, and with them every convention that bound me to decency of conduct. In committing these words to paper, I am aware that I am describing the sensations of a lunatic and a savage rather than any that should be possible to a man of birth, sense and cultivation, living in a highly civilised and enlightened age. But if I am to be truthful in these memoirs I must admit that at the moment I failed completely to observe how shamefully, and, what perhaps is worse, how absurdly inappropriate my sentiments were to a gentleman and a courtier.

I raised my eyes to find those of Mademoiselle Claude fixed upon my face. She was still singing, but I could not distinguish the words nor even recognize to which language they belonged. Her gaze did not startle me for I seemed to know that it had been resting on me for some time. I saw that her eyes, in this light at any rate, were neither blue nor lilac as I had thought, but pale green like those of the white cat that stood, arched and purring, on the arm of her chair; and, like the cat's, the pupils were perpendicular.

Heedless of manners, I looked hard to assure myself of the fact; and her eyes which had been so bashfully abased all the evening did not flicker nor turn away under my stare but continued to gaze into mine until I became conscious of nothing but their pale and luminous depths. They seemed to grow and to diminish, to come near and to recede very far away, and all the time the tune she sang moved up and down as in the measure of a dance, and the words she sang remained unintelligible yet gradually appeared to be familiar.

Suddenly the song ceased, and I started involuntarily and shook myself as though I had been rudely awakened from an oppressive dream. I looked around me, hardly able to believe that my surroundings had remained the same from the time when Mademoiselle Claude had begun to sing. Mademoiselle Marie, seated on a low stool next to her elder sister, was leaning so close against her that her face was completely hidden and her whole body was as stiff and motionless in its crouched position as if it had been paralysed.

Mademoiselle de Riennes sat as still as she, but her eyes now raised themselves to mine slowly and with difficulty and I caught a glimpse of the same expression of agonised entreaty that had arrested me when I first rose to greet her youngest sister. It was only a glimpse, for the next instant they fell again as though not bearing to look longer into mine. In some way that I must fail to express, she appeared smaller and more insignificant. I wondered that I had ever thought of her as possessing good looks and distinction of manners.

Madame de Riennes had fallen into a doze and it may have been this that gave her, too, a slightly shrunken appearance. Certainly it struck me that she was much older and feebler than I had comprehended. I do not remember how I took my leave of them for the night, I only remember Madame la Comtesse murmuring weakly as she wished me good rest, "She is so white, my daughter—too white, too white."

* * *

The comfort of a good bed again after so long and uncomfortable a journey was by far my most important reflection on reaching my room, and as my valet prepared me for that blessed condition, the experiences and fancies of the past evening resolved themselves into the opinion that my imagination had been highly strung by the fatigues of the journey and the strangeness of new surroundings, and that in reality the family of the de Riennes were a very good, kindly, though old-fashioned sort of people, and that I had three pretty girls to choose from, though it was still a little difficult to know which to choose.

"Mademoiselle Marie is the prettiest," I told myself on climbing into bed. "But Mademoiselle de Riennes has the most sense," I added, as Jacques drew the curtains round me, "and Mademoiselle Claude"—I began as I laid my head on the pillows, but I found that I did not know what I thought of Mademoiselle Claude and was just dropping off to sleep without troubling to consider the question when I remembered that I had noticed something very strange about her eyes when she was singing.

For a moment I could not recall what it was, then suddenly it occurred to me, and

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with a sensation of horror that I had not felt at all at the time I had observed it, that the pupils of the eyes instead of being round were long and pointed.

I was exceedingly sleepy when I thought of this, but I woke myself by repeating several times an though it were of urgent importance that I should remember it—"The eyes are not human. Remember, the eyes are not human."

I repeated it until I forgot what it was that had struck my observation, yet it seemed an imperative necessity that I should remember what it was that had filled my whole being with that sense of utmost horror. In my efforts to do so I fell sound asleep.

Nothing is more irritating than to be wakened out of a deep and dreamless slumber by some small, persistent noise. The noise I heard in my sleep kept awakening me again and again until at last, tired of perpetually dropping off and being aroused, I sat up in bed and listened. I heard something rustling outside my door, a soft running tread every now and then up and down the passage, and then, what I knew had awakened me so many times, something scratching at the door itself. I decided I must go and see what it was but felt the most absurd and shameful reluctance to do so.

I put out my hand through the curtains to reach for my bedgown on the chair beside me. Instead of the accustomed touch of velvet and fur that I expected, my hand seemed to be grasping a long cold finger. I recoiled in violent agitation, and as I snatched my hand away and covered it with my other as though to assure myself of a human touch, I thought I felt the finger drawn slowly across my forehead.

I shuddered from it, and yet my horror was mingled with an inexplicable pleasure. Trembling with excitement rather than with fear, I now drew aside the bed curtains, leapt out and opened the shutters.

The moon was nearly at the full, and by its brilliant light I could see, laid on my bedgown, the white and slender stalk of the wild autumn crocus that Mademoiselle Claude had presented to me. It surprised me, for I had no recollection of laying it there and indeed thought I had dropped it into the fire. In any case there was a satisfactory explanation of the cause of my ridiculous terrors, and the touch on my forehead must have been an imaginary result of them. It was odd, though, that as I took up the flower, the sensation of it seemed completely different from the thing that I had first grasped, and I marvelled that I could ever have mistaken it for a human finger.

ALL WAS so silent now that I got back into bed, first laying my sword on the chair beside me, and was just falling asleep when again I heard the rustle outside, and a soft stroking rather than scratching against my door. I stretched out my hand for the sword and found that it was shaking. This evidence of my womanish apprehension was so unaccountable and utterly confounding that I began to wonder if I were not already paying the price, though certainly an overheavy one, of the pleasures naturally pertaining to a gallant man.

I resolved that now I was about to marry, I would make a different disposition of my life, abandon such pleasures, and settle on my country estates at St. Aignan. At this moment I heard that same furtive noise again on the door, and the idea that my plans for reforming were the result of the scratchings of a cat caused me to burst into a roar of laughter which wholesomely restored me to my natural self.

I snatched up my sword and ran to the door. I could see nothing but darkness, but I heard a faint "miaw" somewhere down the passage and went quickly and cautiously towards it, calling "Puss, Puss, Puss," laughing to myself at the thought of the murder I was contemplating on the favourite of two of my hostesses, and already planning the apology I should have to make. The door into my moonlit room had swung to after me and I had to feel my way in the blackness. Suddenly I felt claws round my leg and knew that the cat must have rushed at me from behind. I struck quickly down with my sword and thought I hit something soft and springing but could not be quite sure. There was no savage "miaw" in response to show I had hurt the brute.

I went back to my room and on examining my sword in the moonlight, found that there was a small streak of blood on it. I thought with satisfaction that that would probably keep the beast away from my door, and settled myself for sleep. I was wrong, for all night I was disturbed by subdued sounds of scampering and scuffling in the passage, and more than once I thought that I felt the lightest pressure of a cold finger on my eyelids.

When Jacques brought me my chocolate in the morning, he found me more worn out and irritable than after a night of debauch. He exclaimed when he saw my sword on which the blood had dried, and I told him to clean it, saying that the cat had been disturbing my rest and that I had struck at it. My head throbbed and ached so uncomfortably that I decided I would refresh myself with a good ride before meeting any of my host's family, and ordered my mare to be saddled at once.

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As I went down into the courtyard, I saw the white cat sleeping in a sunny corner of the steps. I turned the animal over with my boot, and it stretched out its paws and clawed playfully at the air. I could discover no sign of any wound anywhere upon it. I asked the groom what other cats they had, and he replied that this was the only one in the château. I got into the saddle, too much mystified to care to think, and rode as hard as I could.

The morning was fresh and pleasant, and the country looked excellent for boar-hunting. I was wondering what entertainment in that way my host meant to show me after my long abstinence (sport in England being of the tamest) when my attention was struck by a huge stone a little way off. I was riding across a fairly smooth slope of moorland with hills on my right that rose in abrupt and monstrous shapes as though thrown up by some violent cataclysm of the earth, while on my left stretched a vast plain as far as I could see. The whole was desolate because uncultivated, but in the morning sunshine the hideous aspect of the country did not oppress one as in the gloomy twilight in which I had first seen it. The stone I had noticed was conspicuous for its size and solitariness, for there were no rocks near.

I was riding up to it when suddenly my mare behaved in exactly the same manner as the evening before, shying violently and then rearing and plunging. I succeeded at last in quieting her sufficiently to keep still, but it was beyond my power to make her advance another step. I had always treated her with the consideration due to a lady of high breeding and mettlesome spirit, but on this occasion I must admit her whims drove me to a pretty considerable use of whip and spur. But all to no effect. She would not advance one step nearer the stone.

I dismounted and was about to see whether I could not drag her thither by the bridle, when I noticed footprints at my feet, just in front of my mare's forefeet that were so obstinately planted on the ground. There was nothing odd in finding footprints on the moor, but what was odd was that they did not advance straight in any direction but curved sharply round. I followed them a little way and saw that the marks were exceeding confused, as though many pairs of feet had trodden close upon each other in the same spot. The grass, in fact, was all kicked up, and when I had followed this rough curve a little distance I saw that it was part of the outline of a vast circle in which the stone was, more or less accurately, the centre point.

I had no sooner made this perplexing discovery than I observed a respectable-looking man in black approaching me, whom I presently perceived to be a priest. He greeted me in an abrupt and not over-respectful fashion, asking if I were not afraid to go so near the fairy ring. Few people, he said, would care to adventure themselves so close to it even in broad sunlight. I observed, smiling, that the fairies in this part of the world must be remarkably substantial to have kicked up the ground so vigorously, and asked if he could not give me some more reasonable explanation of the footprints. He looked at me with a suspicious kind of sullen stupidity that made me conclude he was probably very little above the level of a peasant himself.

I left him to walk over to the stone which I examined with some interest. The ground had been much disturbed close under it, and the stone itself, which was at on the top like a table, was covered with dark stains. It occurred to me that here was a possible explanation of my mare's refusal to approach any nearer. Horses are notoriously sensitive to the smell of blood, and I was certain that the stains I was looking at were those of dried blood. I went back to the priest and asked him what the stone was used for.

"It is never used, Monsieur," he cried, "no one in the country would go near it."

"Then," said I, "what are those dark stains on it?"

His little dark eyes looked at me anxiously and shiftily as though he disliked the subject.

"A holy man and a son of the Church, Monsieur, can know nothing of such things. Some say that this stone is haunted by devils and that they or the fairies, who resemble them, dance in a ring round it." He crossed himself and continued, "I say that it is better not to speak of these things but to pray against temptation and the wiles of the devil and to implore the help and protection of Holy Church." He added that he was the *curé* of Riennes and chaplain to the convent near by, and invited me to look at his church which was not far off. I found myself walking with him, more out of inattention than politeness, my horse's bridle on my arm.

There was nothing to interest me in his church, a wretched chapel built at the rude Gothic period and even more chilly and uncomfortable than such buildings usually are.

I gave him something for his church, and mounting my mare, I rode back to the château.

I MET one of the grooms at the gate, and throwing my bridle to him, walked through the gardens. As I had hoped, I saw the curve of a hooped petticoat on one of the seats, and hurrying towards it found Mademoiselle de Riennes and Mademoiselle Marie seated to-

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gether, the younger reading her breviary aloud. Her hair caught reflections of gold in the sunlight in a way that enchanted me, and I lost no time in informing her of the fact in terms sufficiently metaphorical to be correct.

My compliments were received with a foolish stare, not even a blush to show they were comprehended. If a woman cannot take a compliment, she is lost. I turned to her sister to be met with better success, while the younger's attention returned to her breviary. Mademoiselle de Riennes tried to distract her from it, fearing, I think, that I might be offended.

"No, no," replied the fair *dévote*, in an anxious and pleading manner, "I promised Mother Abbess in Lianon I would always read first. But I will not disturb you by it—I can read elsewhere."

She was about to rise but I sprang up from the grass where I had been sitting at their feet and detained her.

"Do not, I beg of you, Mademoiselle," said I, "deprive me of an example as charming as it is edifying. I can never hope to see again such usually opposed qualities in such perfect conjunction."

Then remembering that I was wasting my breath, I asked her as one would ask a child if she were very fond of the Mother Abbess she mentioned. She did not pay full attention to my question at first and I noticed a habit she continually had of brushing her hand across her eyes and then staring, as though she were not certain of what she saw. Then she answered, "Oh, yes, very fond. One is safe with her."

I glanced at Mademoiselle de Riennes to find how she took this odd remark, but was surprised that she seemed to have received it with an unreasonable amount of perturbation. She rallied herself quickly however, and said to me, "My sister has always wished to enter the convent at Lianon, which is an order stricter than the convent here at Riennes. She has the vocation."

I wondered whether Mademoiselle were entirely disinterested, in giving me this information, and I asked her what were her own feelings with regard to the conventual life. She replied in an even tone without a trace of that desire to please that had shown hitherto in all her remarks, "That it is a useful necessity. That as it is no longer considered humane to expose newly born daughters to the wolves on the hillside, their parents must be able to place them later in convents where they may die slowly, not from rigours and mortifications but from tedium, the tedium that makes all day and all night seem one perpetual and melancholy afternoon."

Her eyes glittered with so strange an expression of hatred and even rage, that she, whom I had hitherto considered as the most reasonable of the family, now appeared almost wild. I wondered why her parents had not given her the right of priority which belonged to her, instead of leaving the choice to me.

My father's remarks on the subject came back to me, and I now considered that I had certainly better choose Medemoiselle de Riennes and satisfy the strictest claims of honour and delicacy. This decision was the easier to reach since Mademoiselle Marie had again shown so plainly she was a fool. I rose and took my leave of them that I might go and find the Comte to tell him my decision, for I feared that to wait too long before arriving at it might look like discourtesy.

I walked down an alley between clipped box hedges that rose above my head, and as I turned a corner I saw Mademoiselle Claude walking in my direction. She was correctly attired in a grey lute-string nightgown with ruffles of fine embroidery; her hands were folded in front of her and her head, slightly bent, was neatly dressed. When I had greeted her I asked if she had been walking long in the garden.

"No, Monsieur," she replied, "I have been to the convent. The chaplain informed me of your pious interest in his church."

I disliked the thought that the priest I had met was chaplain to the Convent of Riennes—still more, that he had been talking with Mademoiselle Claude. I asked her which of her sister's opinions she shared concerning the religious life—did she not agree with Mademoiselle de Riennes that it was inexpressibly tedious? She smiled very slightly.

"I should not find life in the convent tedious, Monsieur," she said.

"Then you, like Mademoiselle Marie, have the vocation?"

"I have a vocation."

As she spoke, she at last raised her eyes and looked up at me, nor did they flicker nor turn away as I looked down into them. It came upon me with a shock, that was not all displeasure, that the eyes of this young girl revealed a deeper knowledge of evil, which is what we generally mean by knowledge of life, than was sounded in all my experience as a travelled man of fashion. And as this struck me, I laughed, in a way that should have frightened her, but only brought her nearer to my side with a low, purring murmur, too soft for a laugh, her eyes still fixed on mine.

An extraordinary sensation swam over me. I was trying to remember something that I had seen in or thought about her eyes the evening before. The effort to remember was so strong

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that it was like a physical struggle, and though I felt I might succeed if I drew my eyes away from hers for a moment, I could not do this.

Then I noticed that she was humming the tune of the song that she had sung the night before, and as she did so her body rocked a little, backwards and forwards, as though swaying to the measure of a dance, while her eyes never left mine. I advanced a step towards her, she receded, we seemed to be dancing together, though with what steps and movements I could not say. Presently she was speaking to me, chanting the words to the tune—"Monsieur enjoys dancing? Monsieur will dance with me?"

I seized her by the shoulders. She winced and cried out, her lips contorted with pain that my movement, rough as it was, could not have caused by itself. As she tried to pull herself away, her dress slipped over her shoulder and revealed a freshly made scar on the white skin, caused by a knife or some other weapon. I cried out on seeing it and let go of her, but she pulled her dress over it again in an instant, looking back over her shoulder at me and smiling.

"So Monsieur will dance with me," she said, and moved away from me down the alley so quickly that she seemed to have gone before I had perceived her go.

I was now utterly unwilling to continue my way to the château, to tell the Comte I desired to marry his eldest daughter. I roamed up and down the box alleys for a considerable length of time, ill at ease and dissatisfied. The rest of the day passed in an intolerable mingling of tedium and excitement. I seemed to be waiting for it to pass in eager expectancy of I knew not what. I found myself watching the sun as though I were longing for it to set; again and again I glanced at the clock and told myself, "The moon will be at the full tonight," though I did not know what possible interest that could have for me.

I supposed it was some echo of Madame la Comtesse's maundering fancies when she had rambled to me about her youngest daughter, and I tried to pull myself up sharply and point out that I was myself becoming like an old woman, my mind incapable of decision or reasoning, of anything but a feeble repetition of words and phrases that came from I knew not where.

Yet I could not shake off this mood nor discover what I meant to do regarding my marriage; nor indeed what I was thinking of. I found conversation, even with Mademoiselle de Riennes, unbearably wearisome; it was no pleasure to observe Mademoiselle Marie's beauty which now appeared as insipid and lifeless as a puppet's. I saw Mademoiselle Claude again only in the presence of her parents, but she never spoke nor did she look at me.

IN THE evening I chanced to be alone with the Comte. I felt that he was expecting me to speak of my marriage, and suddenly I knew that it was only his youngest daughter I had any desire to marry—a desire so burning and importunate that I marvelled I had not realised my wishes sooner. I spoke of them, saying that though I was anxious to perform the part of a man of scrupulous honour, I could not but take advantage of his liberality and make my choice according to the dictates of my heart.

He showed no surprise, and gave his consent in terms appropriate and correct, with nothing that I could interpret as expressive of displeasure. Yet he spoke mechanically and with a strained, uneasy attention, almost, or so it sometimes appeared, as if he were listening and repeating someone else's words, instead of directly answering me. It struck me when he had finished speaking, that he was a smaller and a duller man than I had formerly observed him to be.

I found a pretext for going early to my room, where I paced up and down in a fever of restlessness. In spite of the exaltation of my new desires and the immediate prospect of their fruition, I felt that I had never been so much bored in the course of my whole existence as at that moment; that never before had I discovered how ineffably tedious and wearisome that whole existence had been.

I remembered the various pleasures I had experienced and marvelled that I had ever found zest in them; my deepest passions, my most exciting adventures, now appeared as flat, trivial and insipid as the emotions and escapades of a schoolboy. I wondered with a kind of despair if there were nothing left in life that could amuse me. The fact that my marriage was to be one of inclination should no doubt have answered this question, but I seemed already satiated with that as with all else.

I would have bartered all that was most dear to me, my possessions, my name, my life, my honour, my soul itself, for any new experience that could satisfy this new curiosity and raise me from my intolerable tedium. Desires arose in me so monstrous and unnatural that my thoughts could scarcely find shape or name for them, yet I regarded them calmly, without horror, without even surprise.

At last I went to bed, because however much I longed to be occupied there was no other occupation for me. In spite of the disordered turmoil in my brain, I fell asleep quickly. No

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noises disturbed me this time. I did not dream, but I woke as suddenly as I had fallen asleep. I drew back my bed-curtains and saw that the room was full of moonlight, for the window shutters which Jacques had closed before he left me for the night were now wide open, and I could hear a great noise of wind in the pine trees outside. In the middle of the floor stood the white cat, perfectly still, its back arched and tail erect, its pale green eyes glaring at me. It now leaped on to the foot of the bed and began ramping its paws up and down on the quilt in a state of violent excitement, uttering short wild mewing cries.

I kicked it off, but it sprang on to another part of the bed and clawed at the bed-clothes as though trying to pull them off. A cloud must have passed over the moon for the room was momentarily darkened, and a blast of wind came roaring through the pines and rushed in through my open shutters, blowing the bed-curtains all over me. In that instant I could have sworn that I felt the light cold touch of a hand on my heart.

I scrambled out of bed and hurried on my clothes as though my life depended on getting dressed instantly. Clapping on my sword-belt I strode to the door and found the cat there awaiting me. It was purring loudly, and looking back to see if I was following, it trotted into the passage. I could just see a vague shape of something white as it passed before me through the darkness and I followed downstairs and along passages until I came plump against a closed door. I fumbled for bolts and locks and unfastened them, hearing always the purring of the cat close by me. It never occurred to me to wonder why I was following this beast I detested, out of doors in the middle of the night.

As soon as the door was open I hurried out as fast as I could, through the gardens and out on to the countryside. I was not following the cat now, nor did I see it anywhere. I did not know where I was going, but presently I perceived that I was on the same broad slope of moorland where I had ridden that morning. There were sharp risings and fallings in the ground that I had avoided in my ride, and that prevented my seeing far in front; also, though the moon when unclouded shone clear in the sky, and a low-lying miasmic fog obscured the ground.

As I rose to the summit of one of these mounds, I stopped and listened. I thought that I had heard music, but as the wind rushed onwards through the pine woods behind me, I could no longer distinguish it. At this moment the whole light of the full moon shone out from behind a hurrying cloud, and I saw vaguely before me in the mist a vast circle of apparently human figures, revolving in furious movement round some huge and dark object of fantastic shape. Clouds of smoke, reddened now and then by fire, rose round this object and were swept onwards in the wind.

I ran towards the circle; as I did so, the music came nearer, now loud, now faint, on the uncertain blast, and I recognised the tune as the same that Mademoiselle Claude had sung to me. I approached cautiously as I drew near. Sometimes the ring of dancers swung so near me that I was within a few feet of them, sometimes it receded far away. All the figures were holding hands and faced outwards, their backs toward the centre of the circle that they formed.

I saw the figures of men, women and even children flying past me; not one had a human face. The faces of goats, toads and cats, of grinning devils and monkeys, showed opposite me for one instant, clear in the moonlight or obscured by the drifting smoke. Those that seemed most horrible of all were white faces that had no features.

Suddenly the ring broke for one instant as it swung within a yard of where I crouched, and at that moment a blinding cloud of smoke blew into my face. A hand was flung out and touched mine, a light cold touch that I knew. I seized it and sprang to my feet, immediately my other hand was clasped and I was swung madly onwards into the movement of the dance.

I could now no longer see the dancers, not even those on either side of me whose hands I grasped. I saw nothing but the night, the smoke, the flying landscape, now vague and vast as of an illimitable sea of fog, now black and hideous shapes of mountains that rose sharply in the moonlight. I felt an exhilaration such as I had never known, a brusque and furious enjoyment, as though my senses and powers were quickened beyond their natural limit. Yet again and again I found I was trying to remember something, with the urgency and even the agony that besets one in a nightmare; but my mind appeared to have forsaken its office.

Then without any warning the hands in my clasp were torn from me, and the ring broke in all directions. I staggered back unable to keep my balance in the shock of the suddenly loosened contact; the next instant I realised that she who had first taken my hand had gone, and I was hunting madly for her through that monstrous assembly.

Though the ring had broken, the music continued, and I jostled many who were still dancing, back to back, with their hands joined. In the misty confusion it was impossible to

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distinguish anything clearly; I thought I saw gigantic toads dressed in green velvet who were carrying dishes, but I did not stay to remark them. Huge clouds of dun-coloured smoke arose before me, lit up momentarily by flames, and in their midst I saw for an instant a shape that seemed greater and more hideous than the human. A mighty voice arose from it, speaking it seemed some word of command, and straightway all the company fell on their knees.

Then I saw her whom I had been seeking. She stood erect on what appeared to be a black throne, the fiery smoke behind her. The moon, darkened of late, shone out on her white limbs that were scarcely concealed by the fluttering rags she wore. Her loosened hair blew straight before her face, and appeared snow-white in the moonlight. Something gleamed in her uplifted hand, she bent, and at this moment an awful cry arose, a sobbing shriek so deformed by its extreme anguish and terror that though it was certainly human I could not distinguish if it were from man, woman or child. The figure rose erect, her arms flung wide as in triumph, her face revealed. It was the face of Mademoiselle Claude.

I RUSHED towards the throne; it was the huge stone I had observed on my ride. She turned towards me, her face bent down to greet me, her lips parted in laughter, her eyes gleaming as I had never seen them, her whole body transfused with some mysterious force that seemed to fill her with life, pleasure and attraction more than human. My senses reeled as in delirium, I seized her in my arms and dragged her from the stone. In doing so, my hand closed on the knife in hers, and something warm and wet drenched my fingers. The meaning of that hideous death-cry I had just heard suddenly penetrated my numbed and stupefied brain—and I stood stiff with horror, cold sweat breaking out on my hands and forehead.

She twisted herself in my arms till her face looked up into mine; her eyes shone like pale flames and appeared to draw near and then recede very far away, and with them my horror likewise receded until I felt I was forgetting the very cause of it. Yet it seemed to me, as though someone not myself were telling me, that if I did so, the consequences would be worse than death. I struggled desperately to recall what I had felt, and with it something else that all that past day and this night I had been trying to remember. I longed to pray but was ashamed to enlist the aid of a Power that until that moment I had doubted and mocked.

Her arms slid upwards round my neck; my flesh shuddered beneath their embrace as from contact with some loathsome thing, yet she seemed but the more desirable. My consciousness began to fail me as I bent over her. Again the eyes came close, enormous, and I stared at the pupils, black and perpendicular in their green depths. A voice that I did not at first

recognise for my own shrieked aloud—"They are not human. Remember, the eyes are not human."

As I cried out, I found that I could remove my eyes from hers, I looked down at what I held, and on her naked shoulder saw the scar I had observed that morning. I knew now that it had been made by my own sword the night before when I had struck in the darkness at her familiar, and the discovery turned me sick and faint. I frantically repulsed the accursed white body that clung to mine, and made to draw my sword. The witch screamed not in fear but in laughter, and flung herself upon me with her knife before I could get my sword free from its scabbard. I fended off the blow on my heart, and with my left arm dripping blood I seized her wrist while my right, now holding my sword, was raised to strike.

In that instant I was seized from behind by what seemed to be a hundred slippery hands clawing at my neck, arms and ankles. The whole mob, laughing, sobbing, screaming, chuckling, was round me and upon me. It appeared certain that I should be overcome, but I struck out madly with my sword and succeeded in effecting some clearance round me.

A kind of berserker fury consumed me; I

(Continued on page 111)

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GOLDEN ATLANTIS

Atlantis is no fable. I have heard
The murmur of its bells on golden nights.
And in the wailing of the tropic bird
The memory of ancient homing flights
To a tall island where the humblest rights—
Those of a bird as well as man—were held
Sacred since inborn, safe from jealous spites.
Atlantis was a land where freedom dwelled.

They were not truly sages who averred
That the great eastern Atlantean bights
Lay close to Egypt, and that from them purred
The sphinx-prowed galleys, spreading dark delights
Along the Nile, creating appetites
Brazen as Moloch's. Could the golden-belled
Have chimed with slavers of Israelites?
Atlantis was a land where freedom dwelled.

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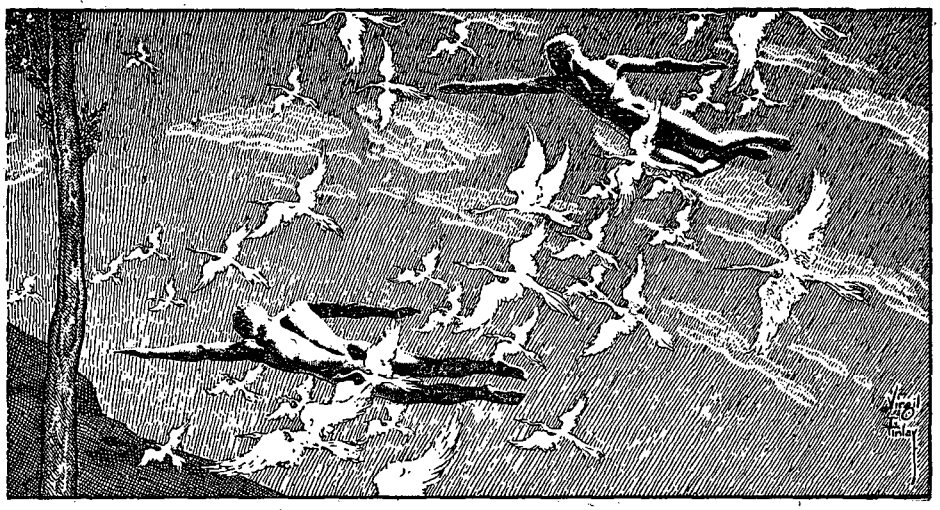

By Richard Butler Glaenzer

This I know best—down in my heart has stirred,
In answer to the Pool of Malachites,
Still bubbling fathoms deep, the living word—
A word so healing that it cured all blights
A word so kindly that it checked all slights,
A word from which all loving-kindness welled.
The word that follows, in the tongue of sprites:
"Atlantis was a land where freedom dwelled!"

Envoi

Prince of the world, Maker of blacks and whites,
Of red men, yellow, man however spelled,
Giver whose hand, disdained as empty, smites,
Atlantis was, *a land where freedom dwelled.*

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NOBODY'S HOUSE

By A. M. Burrage

He asked a question of the dead, and out of the dread silence he got the fatal answer. . . .

THEY faced each other across the threshold of the great doorway in the dimness of two meagre lights. It was just dusk on a windy autumn evening, and Mrs. Park, the caretaker, had brought a candle with her to answer the summons at the door. Behind the stranger the last grey light of the day filtered through veils of dingy, low-flying clouds. Between them the candle flame fluttered in the draught like a yellow pennon, the cavernous darkness of the hall advancing and retreating like some monster at once curious and shy.

The man was tall and broad and seemingly in the early fifties. He wore a grey moustache and beard, both closely trimmed, and his black velour hat was pulled low down over a high forehead. His overcoat was cut to an old-fashioned pattern, having a cape to it, and it was perhaps this which lent him an air of—even at his years—having outlived his age.

He was fumbling in an inside pocket when the door was opened, and he said nothing until he had produced an envelope.

"I have an order from Messrs. Flake and Limpenny to see the house." Here he offered Mrs. Park the envelope. "I am afraid I have called at an inopportune time, but I missed one train and the next arrived late. Perhaps, however, you won't mind showing me over the place?"

He spoke slowly and a little nervously, as if he were repeating a speech which he had previously prepared. His voice was very low and mellowed and gentle. Mrs. Park stood back from the threshold.

"Will you come in, sir?" she said. "I am afraid you won't be seeing the house at its best. I shall have to show you over by candle; there is no gas or electric light."

He stepped inside and scrutinized her. She was a tall, gaunt, middle-aged woman of the kind which is generally described as "superior". Nature had intended her to become matron of an institute. Fate and widowhood had forced her a rung or two down the ladder. She looked what she was—honest, hard-working, and almost devoid of sympathy.

"I'm afraid," she added in her hard, toneless voice, "you'll find everything just anyhow. I wasn't expecting anybody. Very few people come here nowadays. And a place of this size takes more than one pair of hands to keep it clean."

"It has been empty a long time, then?"

"Ever since—" She checked herself suddenly. "For more than twenty years, I should think." She turned her shoulder upon him, lifting the candle above her head. "This is supposed to be a fine hall, and everybody admires the staircase. If the house doesn't find a tenant or a purchaser soon, I hear they intend removing the staircase and selling it separately. There is a lot of fine oak panelling, too. The library—"

Turning to see if he were listening, she saw him start and shiver and rub his long, thin hands together.

"Excuse me," he said. "I have been a long time in the train, and I am very cold. I wonder if it would be troubling you too much to get me a cup of tea."

"Yes, I could do that," she answered. "The kettle is on, for I intended having one myself. Will you come this way? Perhaps you would like a warm by the fire?"

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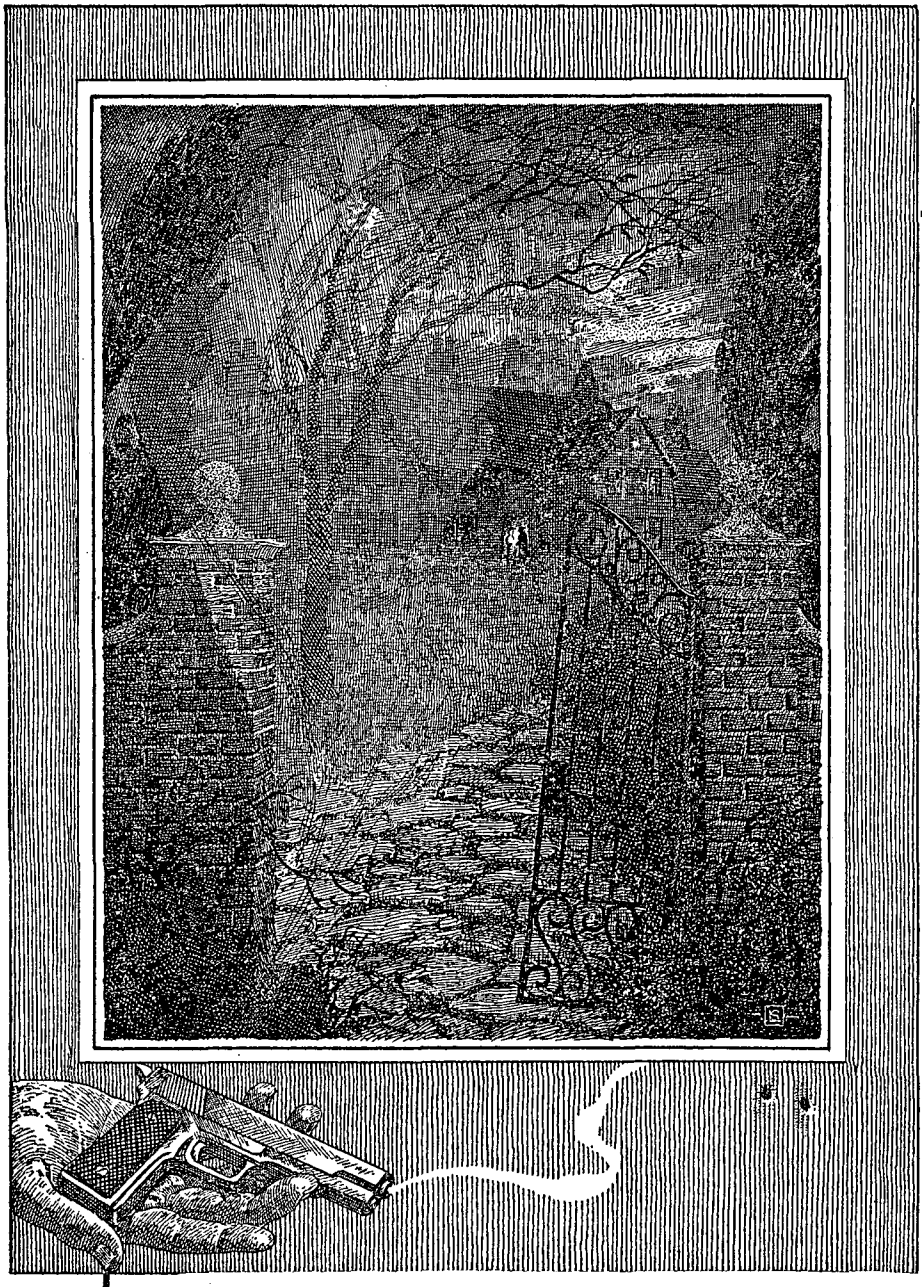

Between them the candle flame fluttered in the draught like a yellow pennon, the cavernous darkness of the hall advancing and retreating like some monster at once curious and shy. . . .

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She led the way across the hall and through a baize-covered door at the end. Turning once to see if she were giving him sufficient light, Mrs. Park noticed that he walked with a slight limp. He followed her down a short passage, through a great kitchen ruddy with firelight, down another passage, and into a small room intended to be used as a housekeeper's parlour. Here there was warmth, even stuffiness. A paraffin lamp stood burning on a flaming red tablecloth.

The room was full of hideous modern cottage furniture, and decorated largely with the portraits of people who ought to have known better than to be photographed. He saw at a glance Mrs. Park in some kind of uniform, Mrs. Park's mother wearing bustles, Mrs. Park's father in stiff Sunday attire and side-whiskers. But a fire burned brightly in the grate, and a kettle on a brass trivet murmured and rattled its lid. This commonplace room, lighted and hot and overfurnished, was at least a relief from the dark passage and the draughty, gloom-ridden hall.

"I'll give you your tea in here, sir, and take mine in the kitchen," the caretaker said.

"Nonsense. Why should you? Besides, I want to talk. Oh, here's the order to view. You see . . . Mr. Stephen Royds—that's my name . . . to view. . . ."

He was running his thumbnail along the sheet of heavily headed office notepaper. Mrs. Park glanced perfunctorily at the typewriting. So far as she was concerned, an order to view was a superfluous formality. She was more interested in this Mr. Royds, who, having removed his hat, disclosed a head of sparse iron-grey hair. He spoke like a gentleman, but there was nothing opulent in his appearance. He looked an unlikely purchaser or tenant; but for that matter she had never been able to visualize the sort of person whom the house would suit.

"I'll remove my greatcoat if you don't mind," he said, while Mrs. Park went to a cupboard for another cup and saucer. "The room is warm." He laid the coat across the back of a chair. "Do you live here entirely alone?"

"Yes."

"Aren't you—nervous?"

She looked up sharply.

"Nervous? What is there to be nervous about?"

"I didn't know. Some people cannot bear loneliness. Can you tell me why the house has been on the market all these years?"

Mrs. Park smiled grimly.

"That's easy enough," she said. "It's nobody's house."

"What do you mean—nobody's house?"

"People who can afford to keep up a great house like this generally want land along with it. There isn't any land. People who don't want land can't afford to keep up a house like this. The estate was sold to Major Skirting. He's a house of his own. He's let the land and he's been trying to let or sell the house ever since. I've shown hundreds over but nobody's ever thought twice about taking it."

"Strange. It's a good house. But the land . . . yes, I quite follow you. To whom used it to belong?"

Mrs. Park set the cup and saucer down upon the table with a rattle.

"A gentleman named Harboys," she said; and suddenly stood rigid, her head a little on one side, in an attitude of listening.

"Do you hear anything?" he asked sharply.

"No. I'll make the tea."

"I suppose you sometimes fancy you hear things?"

She bent over the kettle, giving no answer.

HE WAITED until the teapot was full and then gently repeated the question.

"Hear things?" she repeated with some show of asperity. "No. Why should I?"

"I didn't know. These empty old houses. . . ."

"I'm not one of the fanciful sort, sir. . . ."

She let him see that the talk had veered in a direction contrary to her liking. There was veiled fear in her eyes, and, watching her intently, he could see that she was not impervious to loneliness. Here was a woman who suffered more than she knew. She could bluff her nerves by sheer will power, but this will power was steadily losing in the long battle. Mrs. Park was afraid of something, and always, in her inner consciousness, fighting against that fear.

"Thank you," the stranger said, taking the cup and saucer. "Who was this Harboys? Is he still alive?"

"I couldn't say."

"Isn't there some story about the house? Didn't something happen here?"

"I don't know."

"Forgive me. I think you do."

"There are stories. . . . You don't need to listen. . . ."

She spoke jerkily. Once more he remarked that look in her eyes.

"Tell me," he said gently.

"I can't, sir. If Major Skirting knew I told people I would lose my job. He'd think I was trying to prevent people from taking the house."

"It wouldn't prevent me. Wasn't this Harboys supposed to have shot—"

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"Ah!" She set cup and saucer down with a rattle. "Then you've heard something already, sir!"

"A little. You had better tell me all. It will not affect me in the least as a prospective purchaser."

Mrs. Park passed a hand across her forehead.

"I don't like talking about it, sir. You see, I live here all alone. . . ."

She checked herself suddenly, finding herself about to admit to a second person something which she never confessed even to herself.

"Just so," Royds said sympathetically. "And you sometimes hear noises. What noises?"

"Oh, it's imagination," she said. "Or the wind. Sometimes the wind sounds like footsteps and voices, and sometimes I seem to hear. . . . It may be a loose door somewhere that bangs."

He leaned forward, his eyes shining with the excitement of some strange fascination.

"You mean you hear a shot fired?" he asked, scarcely above a whisper.

Her one hand resting on the table-cloth contracted nervously.

"I've known it to sound like a shot. Oh, I don't believe. . . ."

"They say the house is haunted?" he asked eagerly.

"They say. . . . Oh, when there's been a tragedy happened in a house people will always—"

"Never mind what people say. What do *you* say?" The timbre of his voice had changed; under excitement it had hardened, grown louder. "*Is* the house haunted?"

There was something compelling in Royd's gaze; in the new tone of his voice. She answered him sullenly, helplessly.

"I don't know. I've heard things. I tell myself they're nothing."

"You haven't—*seen* anything?" he asked in a low, strained voice.

"No, thank God! I never go near the library after dark."

"The library? So it was there. Tell me."

Mrs. Park gulped some tea and replenished her cup with a shaking hand.

"It must have been about twenty years ago," she said in a low and curiously unwilling tone. "The place belonged to a Mr. Gerald Harboys. He was quite young—not much more than thirty, and very well liked. Some said he was a bit odd, but there was a strain of oddness in all the Harboys. Mad on hunting he was, and one of the best riders in these parts. You'll be surprised at the size of the stables when you see them. He had them built.

"He'd married a young wife, one of the Miss Greys from Hornfield Manor, and some say he thought more of her than he did of his horses. She used to ride too, and the pair of them, and Mr. Peter Marsh from Brinkchurch, were always together. Harboys and Marsh had known each other since they were in the cradle. Whether there was really anything between Marsh and Mrs. Harboys, I don't know. There's been arguments about that for years, but they're both dead and gone now, and nobody will ever know.

"About one Christmastime Harboys took a fall in the hunting field and broke his leg, and it was during his convalescence that he got into one of his strange moods. I dare say it was being kept out of the hunting field which brought it on. His leg mended slowly, and right at the end of January he could only just get about with a stick. Mrs. Harboys followed the hounds every time there was a meet in the neighborhood and, with her husband unable to get about, she saw more of Peter Marsh than usual. But nobody seemed to know that Mr. Harboys was jealous or that he suspected anything wrong.

"Well, one day at the end of January, Mrs. Harboys went out hunting, and her husband brooded all day over the library fire. During the afternoon he amused himself by cleaning a revolver, which he afterwards laid aside on the mantelpiece within reach. Mrs. Harboys came in just after dark. Peter Marsh had been piloting her, and she brought him with her.

"While she was ordering tea and poached eggs to be sent up to the morning-room, she sent Peter Marsh into the library to get himself a whisky and tell Mr. Harboys about the day's hunting. He had not been in the library a minute when angry voices were heard and then a sho . The butler then burst into the room and found Peter Marsh lying dead, and Mr. Harboys, still in his chair before the fire, staring wildly at the body, with the revolver in his hand."

She paused, and in the silence she heard Royds breathing heavily. His head was bent and his gaze lowered to the near edge of the table, so that she could scarcely see his face.

"Mr. Harboys," she resumed, "pleaded not guilty at the trial and said that his mind was a blank at the time when the shot was fired. He couldn't remember anything that had happened between Marsh coming into the room and then the butler bending over the dead body. His counsel put in a plea for insanity, but the jury would not have it. They found him guilty and added a recommendation for mercy. The death penalty was changed to penal servitude for life."

She broke off and began to muse.

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"That must be twenty years ago. . . . They let them out after twenty years. He's out already, or soon will be, if he's alive."

Slowly Royds lifted his head and turned burning eyes upon her face.

"And do you think Harboys did it?" he demanded.

The question took Mrs. Park aback.

"Of course! Why! How else could it have happened? There was only those two in the room. It couldn't have happened any other way."

Royds got upon his legs. His pale face was shining with little drops of moisture, his eyes aflame with a strange passion.

"I swear to you," he cried, "that I don't believe Harboys did it. I knew the man—"

Mrs. Park's stare intensified and she uttered a smothered exclamation.

"I knew him well as child and boy and man. I was at school with Harboys. I tell you he was incapable of murder! All the circumstantial evidence in the world would not weigh an atom with me against my knowledge of his character. They say he had fits of madness. Another lie! But mad or sane he couldn't have done it. He loved his wife—and Peter Marsh, too. He knew that they were two of God's best and whitest people. I tell you—"

He broke off suddenly and lowered his voice.

"I'm frightening you," he said. "I didn't mean to. Oh, but think! There's Harboys been rotting in prison these twenty years, remembering nothing of those few dreadful moments. To this day he doesn't know if he's innocent or guilty. Think of it."

MRS. PARK lifted her white face and twitching lips. One hand had stolen to the region of her heart. Each rapid stroke of her pulses seemed to shake her.

"Why have you come here?" she cried in a voice which rose high and querulous with a nameless dread. "You don't want the house! You never intended—"

"No," said Royds, "I came here to find out."

"What?"

"They say strange things happen in the library. I have heard stories. You tell me you have heard footfalls, voices, the sound of a shot. Don't you understand, woman? What happened in the library that evening twenty years ago is known only to God! The man who lives remembers nothing. If it be true that Peter Marsh returns. . . . Oh, don't you understand? It is the only way of learning . . . the only way. . . ."

Mrs. Park stood up; her slim body made a barrier between him and the door.

"I can't let you go to the library," she cried, sharply.

"I must. I'm going to spend the night there. I'm going to wait until Peter—"

"I can't let you," she said again.

"But you must. Don't you understand? This means life or death to a man."

She backed almost to the door.

"It's madness!" she cried. "Nobody has ever endured that room after nightfall."

"I will!"

"I shall be sent away if it is found out," she said.

"It won't be found out. I'll recompense you if it is. Here, I came prepared to pay for the privilege." He tugged a bundle of bank notes roughly out of his breast pocket and flung them on the table. "How much do you want? Five pounds? Ten? Twenty?"

Mrs. Park's gaze lingered on the roll of notes. She knew the value of money. Besides, she was alone in the great house with a man it might be dangerous to thwart.

"Come," said Royds, "here are five five-pound notes. Take them and act like a sensible woman. Then I shall go to the library, and you will make me a fire. Is there any furniture there?"

"No," muttered the woman, her gaze still on the roll of bank notes.

"Then, if you will permit me, I will take a chair."

He picked up the notes again and transferred all of them but five to his breast pocket. With these five he advanced and pressed them into the woman's hand. Her fingers closed over them.

"I'm doing wrong," she muttered.

"You're doing right. I'll get the truth tonight if I have to summon the devil himself. Now come and help me make a fire in the library."

She turned heavily away without a word and went to a cupboard, from the bottom of which she took a bundle of firewood and an old sheet of newspaper, which she dropped on top of the contents of the half-filled scuttle. Then she lit a candle in a brass stick and motioned him towards the door. He picked up a chair as he followed her.

The house was very still as they passed through the kitchen and passages leading to the hall. Their footfalls on the uncarpeted floor rang out sonorously through the hollow shell of the house. To the woman this shattering of a silence which seemed almost sacred was a new weapon put into the hands of Terror. Her overstrained nerves cried out in protest at each of the man's heavy steps.

Around her, in the shifting penumbra beyond reach of the candlelight, above her in

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the empty upper chambers of the house, all manner of sleeping horrors, shapeless abominations of the night-world, seemed to waken and listen and draw near. The silent house seemed full of stealthy movements, and each blotch of darkness was as ambush, peopled by the awful phantasms of her mind. The man walking behind her seemed to be without nerves, or he had so stimulated them as to bring them entirely under his control.

Evidently he knew the house, for he passed her in the hall, taking the lead in the procession of two, and went straight to the library door, which he flung open and passed on the crest of the following candlelight.

The library was a long room in an angle of the house. A long row of windows fronted the hearth, and two more faced the door. The walls were of oak panels stained a mahogany colour, but in that dim light they looked black, as if they were hung with funereal trappings.

The man lingered between the door and the first of the windows while Mrs. Park, half closing her eyes, hurried across to the fireplace with the scuttle. He seemed to be searching for something. Presently he found it.

"There's a hole in one of those panels," he announced.

Mrs. Park's heart gave a leap.

"Yes," she stammered. "It's a—a bullet hole. The shot lodged there after—after—"

'Yes," he said, quietly, "I understand." He crossed the room with a chair and set it down at that corner of the hearth which faced the door and the damaged panel. "And that afternoon, over twenty years ago, I was sitting here—"

There was a crash as the scuttle fell from the woman's hands. All her horror and amazement expressed itself in one thin, muffled scream.

"*You* were sitting there! *You!* Gerald Harboys! Gerald Harboys, the murderer!"

He answered quietly, "Gerald Harboys, or Stephen Royds— God help me, what does it matter? Murderer or not—only God knows! But I shall learn tonight. Light that fire, woman, and then leave me."

She left him and stumbled blindly back to the little vulgar room behind the kitchen. But a fascination stronger than terror drew her back to the outside of the library door, there tremblingly to wait and to listen. . . .

* * *

Harboys, to give him his real name at the last, settled himself on the chair, and at first busied himself with the building up of the fire. Then he took a revolver from his coat pocket, and placed it upon the mantelpiece within his reach.

This done he looked out across the room with a steady gaze.

The firelight wrought strange patterns among the shadows, but in the swiftly changing measures of this shadow-dance he found nothing of what he sought. Presently he began to speak aloud, quietly but very distinctly, so that the shivering woman outside the door brought her hands to her tightening throat.

"Peter, Peter," The tone was almost wheedling. "Can you hear me? I'm sitting in just the same place that I sat that evening, with my bad leg resting on a stool. Here am I, and here's that damned revolver. Now, Peter, won't you come? They say you're always here —that you can't rest because your best friend shot you. Did I shoot you, Peter? My mind's a blank—a blank! For twenty years I have been trying to remember. I have not known peace day and night for twenty years, Peter. Oh, come and tell me! I want to know—to *know*. There's something wrong, Peter. I couldn't have done it. How could I have shot you, boy?"

He relapsed into silence, his gaze never leaving the space between the door and the first window.

After a long minute his voice broke again, choked and almost tearful.

"Is it because you hate me that you won't show yourself, Peter? Was I mad? and did I do it after all? Don't hate me, Peter. I've suffered! Have pity! One way or another I want to end this agony tonight. Oh. God, make him merciful to me! Peter, we'd been friends so long. School . . . don't you remember Wryvern, and those long talks under the lime-trees in the Close on summer nights? And study teas? And then going up to Lord's?"

He babbled on, while kaleidoscopic pictures passed before the eyes of his memory. Cool, dewy morning, and the cricket eleven tumbling out of houses for fielding practice; rows of languid boys in dim classrooms and a scratching of pens; bright sunlight, and white shapes moving on a green sward; crowded touch-lines, and the scrum forming, and goal-posts standing up stark against a grey November sky. In each and all of them he caught a wavering, vanishing glimpse of Peter Marsh.

"Peter!" he cried out again. "Can't you hear me? Won't you come to me? You *do* come back. They all say so. That woman hears you. You—in your scarlet coat, as you came in that evening, I remember . . . when

(Continued on page 113)

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THE MAN WHO COLLECTED POE

By

Robert Bloch

Would Edgar Allan Poe be able to sell his stories if he were writing today? This is a question which has long intrigued editors, authors, readers and critics of fantasy. It is a question I have sought to answer in the only possible way—by writing a story of Poe in the manner which Poe himself might have written it. I do not claim a tenth of his talent or a tithe of his genius . . . but I have proposed deliberately, in so far as possible to recreate his style. Poe scholars will recognize my deliberate inclusion of sentences and sections from "The Fall of the House of Usher", and the casual reader will quite easily discover them. The result is, I believe, a "Poe story" in a rather unique and special sense . . . and one which it gave me great pleasure to write as a tribute to a figure to whom I, like every other writer of fantasy, must own indebtedness—Robert Bloch.

DURING the whole of a dull, dark and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, by automobile, through a singularly dreary tract of country, and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of my destination.

I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain—upon the bleak walls—upon the vacant eye-like windows—upon a few rank sedges—and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with a feeling of utter confusion commingled with dismay. For it seemed to me as though I had visited this scene once before, or read of it, perhaps, in some frequently re-scanned tale. And yet assuredly it could not be, for only three days had passed since I had made the acquaintance of Launcelot Canning and received an invitation to visit him at his Maryland residence.

The circumstances under which I met Canning were simple; I happened to attend a bibliophilic meeting in Washington and was introduced to him by a mutual friend. Casual conversation gave place to absorbed and interested discussion when he discovered my preoccupation with works of fantasy. Upon learning that I was traveling upon a vacation with no set itinerary, Canning urged me to become his guest for a day and to examine, at my leisure, his unusual display of memorabilia.

"I feel, from our conversation, that we have much in common." he told me. "For you see, sir, in my love of fantasy I bow to no man. It is a taste I have perhaps inherited from my father and from his father before him, together with their considerable acquisitions in the genre. No doubt you would be gratified with what I am prepared to show you, for in all due modesty, I beg to style myself the world's leading collector of the works of Edgar Allen Poe."

I confess that his invitation as such did not

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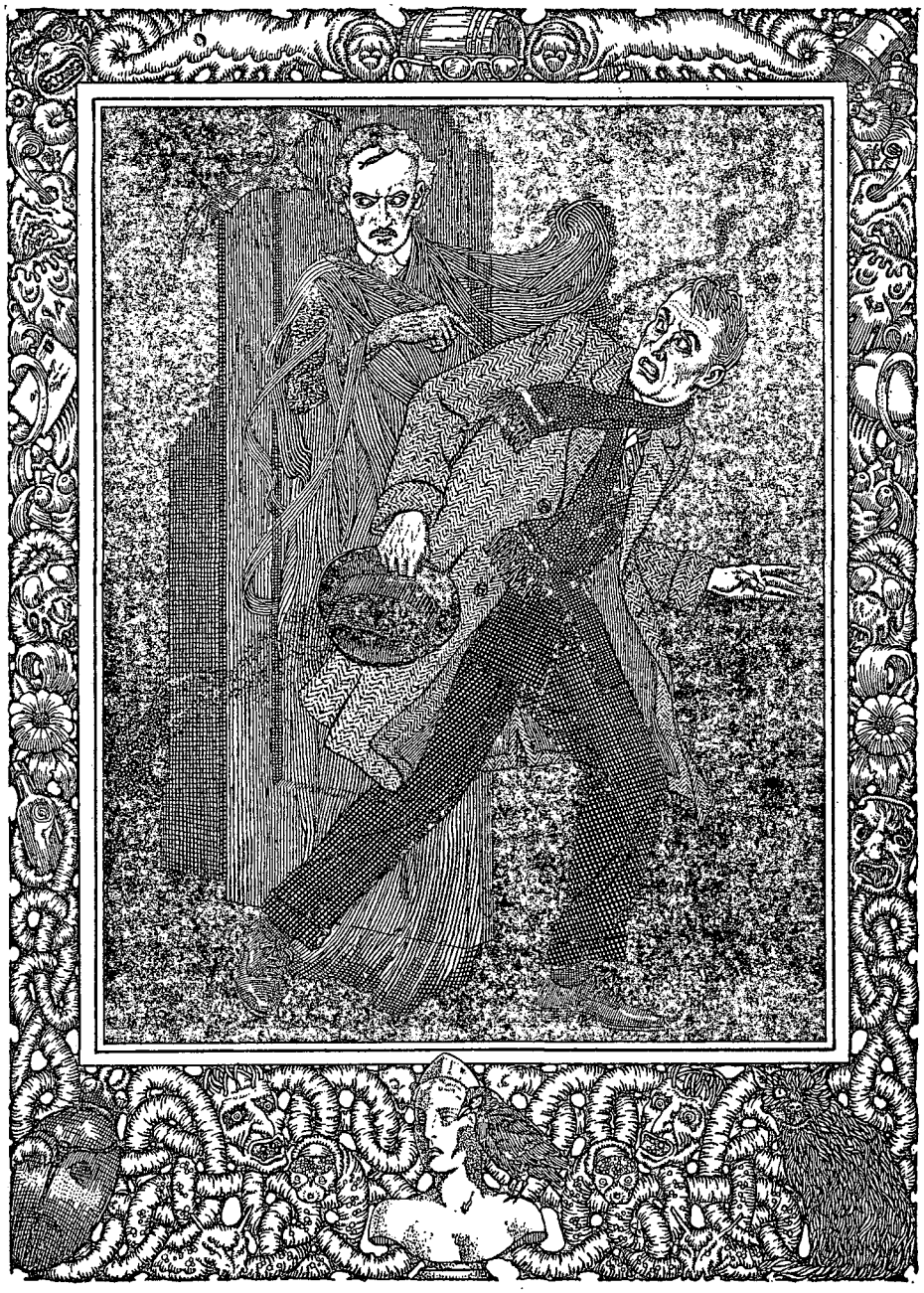

From that mansion I fled aghast, into the storm that was still abroad in all its wrath. . . .

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enthrall me, for I hold no brief for the literary hero-worshipper or the scholarly collector as a type. I own to a more than passing interest in the tales of Poe, but my interest does not extend to the point of ferreting out the exact date upon which Mr. Poe first decided to raise a mustache, nor would I be unduly intrigued by the opportunity to examine several hairs preserved from that hirsute appendage.

So it was rather the person and personality of Launcelot Canning himself which caused me to accept his proferred hospitality. For the man who proposed to become my host might have himself stepped from the pages of a Poe tale. His speech, as I have endeavored to indicate, was characterized by a courtly rodomontade so often exemplified in Poe's heroes —and beyond certainty, his appearance bore out the resemblance.

Launcelot Canning had the cadaverousness of complexion, the large, liquid, luminous eye, the thin, curved lips, the delicately modelled nose, finely moulded chin, and dark, web-like hair of a typical Poe protagonist.

It was this phenomenon which prompted my acceptance and led me to journey to his Maryland estate which, as I now perceived, in itself manifested a Poe-etic quality of its own, intrinsic in the images of the gray sedge, the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows of the mansion of gloom. All that was lacking was a tarn and a moat—and as I prepared to enter the dwelling I half expected to encounter therein the carved ceilings, the sombre tapestries, the ebon floors and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies so vividly described by the author of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.*

Nor, upon entering Launcelot Canning's home was I too greatly disappointed in my expectations. True to both the atmopheric quality of the decrepit mansion and to my own fanciful presentiments, the door was opened in response to my knock by a valet who conducted me, in silence, through dark and intricate passages to the study of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene.

Instead they rendered more distinct that peculiar quality of quasi-recollection; it was as though I found myself once again, after a protracted absence, in a familiar setting. I had read, I had imagined, I had dreamed, or I had actually beheld this setting before.

Upon my entrance, Launcelot Canning arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality.

Yet his tone, as he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him in a mutual discussion of our interests, soon alleviated my initial misapprehension.

Launcelot Canning welcomed me with the rapt enthusiasm of the born collector—and I came to realize that he was indeed just that. For the Poe collection he shortly proposed to unveil before me was actually his birthright.

Initially, he disclosed, the nucleus of the present accumulation had begun with his grandfather, Christopher Canning, a respected merchant of Baltimore. Almost eighty years ago he had been one of the leading patrons of the arts in his community and as such was partially instrumental in arranging for the removal of Poe's body to the southeastern corner of the Presbyterian Cemetery at Fayette and Green Streets, where a suitable monument might be erected. This event occurred in the year 1875, and it was a few years prior to that time that Canning laid the foundation of the Poe collection.

"Thanks to his zeal," his grandson informed me, "I am today the fortunate possessor of a copy of virtually every existing specimen of Poe's published works. If you will step over here"—and he led me to a remote corner of the vaulted study, past the dark draperies, to a bookshelf which rose remotely to the shadowy ceiling—"I shall be pleased to corroborate that claim. Here is a copy of *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane and other Poems* in the eighteen twenty-nine edition, and here is the still earlier *Tamerlane and other Poems* of eighteen twenty-seven. The Boston edition, which, as you doubtless know, is valued today at fifteen thousand dollars. I can assure you that Grandfather Canning parted with no such sum in order to gain possession of this rarity."

He displayed the volumes with an air of commingled pride and cupidity which is oftimes characteristic of the collector and is by no means to be confused with either literary snobbery or ordinary greed. Realizing this, I remained patient as he exhibited further

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treasures—copies of the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier* containing early tales, bound volumes of *The Messenger* during the period of Poe's editorship, *Graham's Magazine*, editions of the *New York Sun* and the *New York Mirror* boasting, respectively, of *The Balloon Hoax* and *The Raven*, and files of *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Ascending a short library ladder, he handed down to me the Lea and Blanchard edition of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, the *Conchologist's First Book*, the Putnam *Eureka*, and, finally, the little paper booklet, published in 1843 and sold for 12½¢, entitled *The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe;* an insignificant trifle containing two tales which is valued by present-day collectors at $50,000.

CANNING informed me of this last fact, and, indeed, keep up a running commentary upon each item he presented. There was no doubt but that he was a Poe scholar as well as a Poe collector, and his words informed tattered specimens of the *Broadway Journal* and *Godey's Lady's Book* with a singular fascination not necessarily inherent in the flimsy sheets or their contents.

"I owe a great debt to Grandfather Canning's obsession," he observed, descending the ladder and joining me before the bookshelves. "It is not altogether a breach of confidence to admit that his interest in Poe did reach the point of an obsession, and perhaps eventually of an absolute mania. The knowledge, alas, is public property, I fear.

"In the early seventies he built this house, and I am quite sure that you have been observant enough to note that it in itself is almost a replica of a typical Poeesque mansion. This was his study, and it was here that he was wont to pore over the books, the letters, and the numerous mementoes of Poe's life.

"What prompted a retired merchant to devote himself so fanatically to the pursuit of a hobby, I cannot say. Let it suffice that he virtually withdrew from the world and from all other normal interests. He conducted a voluminous and lengthy correspondence with aging men and women who had known Poe in their lifetime—made pilgrimages to Fordham, sent his agents to West Point, to England and Scotland, to virtually every locale in which Poe had set foot during his lifetime. He acquired letters and souvenirs as gifts, he bought them, and—I fear—stole them, if no other means of acquisition proved feasible."

Launcelot Canning smiled and nodded. "Does all this sound strange to you? I confess that once I, too, found it almost incredible, a fragment of romance. Now, after years spent here, I have lost my own objectivity."

"Yes, it is strange," I replied. "But are you quite sure that there was not some obscure personal reason for your grandfather's interest? Had he met Poe as a boy, or been closely associated with one of his friends? Was there, perhaps, a distant, undisclosed relationship?"

At the mention of the last word, Canning started visibly, and a tremor of agitation overspread his countenance.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "There you voice my own inmost conviction. A relationship—assuredly there must have been one—I am morally, instinctively certain that Grandfather Canning felt or knew himself to be linked to Edgar Poe by ties of blood. Nothing else could account for his strong initial interest, his continuing defense of Poe in the literary controversies of the day, and his final melancholy lapse into a world of delusion and illusion.

"Yet he never voiced a statement or put an allegation upon paper—and I have searched the collection of letters in vain for the slightest clue.

"It is curious that you so promptly divine a suspicion held not only by myself but by my father. He was only a child at the time of my Grandfather Canning's death, but the attendant circumstances left a profound impression upon his sensitive nature. Although he was immediately removed from this house to the home of his mother's people in Baltimore, he lost no time in returning upon assuming his inheritance in early manhood.

"Fortunately being in possession of a considerable income, he was able to devote his entire lifetime to further research. The name of Arthur Canning is still well known in the world of literary criticism, but for some reason he preferred to pursue his scholarly examination of Poe's career in privacy. I believe this preference was dictated by an inner sensibility; that he was endeavoring to unearth some information which would prove his father's, his, and for that matter, my own, kinship to Edgar Poe."

"You say your father was also a collector?" I prompted.

"A statement I am prepared to substantiate," replied my host, as he led me to yet another corner of the shadow-shrouded study. "But first, if you would accept a glass of wine?"

He filled, not glasses, but veritable beakers from a large carafe, and we toasted one another in silent appreciation. It is perhaps unnecessary for me to observe that the wine was a fine old Amontillado.

"Now, then," said Launcelot Canning. "My father's special province in Poe research consisted of the accumulation and study of letters."

Opening a series of large trays or drawers

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beneath the bookshelves, he drew out file after file of glassined folios, and for the space of the next half hour I examined Edgar Poe's correspondence—letters to Henry Herring, to Doctor Snodgrass, Sarah Shelton, James P. Moss, Elizabeth Poe—missives to Mrs. Rockwood, Helen Whitman, Anne Lynch, John Pendleton Kennedy—notes to Mrs. Richmond, to John Allan, to Annie, to his brother, Henry—a profusion of documents, a veritable epistolary cornucopia.

During the course of my perusal my host took occasion to refill our beakers with wine, and the heady draught began to take effect—for we had not eaten, and I own I gave no thought to food, so absorbed was I in the yellowed pages illumining Poe's past.

Here was wit, erudition, literary criticism; here were the muddled, maudlin outpourings of a mind gone in drink and despair; here was the draft of a projected story, the fragments of a poem; here was a pitiful cry for deliverance and a paean to living beauty; here was a dignified response to a dunning letter and an editorial pronunciamento to an admirer; here was love, hate, pride, anger, celestial serenity, abject penitence, authority, wonder, resolution, indecision, joy, and soul-sickening melancholia.

Here was the gifted elocutionist, the stammering drunkard, the adoring husband, the frantic lover, the proud editor, the indigent pauper, the grandiose dreamer, the shabby realist, the scientific inquirer, the gullible metaphysician, the dependent stepson, the free and untrammeled spirit, the hack, the poet, the enigma that was Edgar Allan Poe.

Again the beakers were filled and emptied. I drank deeply with my lips, and with my eyes more deeply still.

For the first time the true enthusiasm of Launcelot Canning was communicated to my own sensibilities—I divined the eternal fascination found in a consideration of Poe the writer and Poe the man; he who wrote Tragedy, lived Tragedy, was Tragedy; he who penned Mystery, lived and died in Mystery, and who today looms on the literary scene as Mystery incarnate.

And Mystery Poe remained, despite Arthur Canning's careful study of the letters. "My father learned nothing," my host confided, "even though he assembled, as you see here, a collection to delight the heart of a Mabbott or a Quinn. So his search ranged further. By this time I was old enough to share both his interest and his inquiries. Come," and he led me to an ornate chest which rested beneath the windows against the west wall of the study.

Kneeling, he unlocked the repository, and then drew forth, in rapid and marvelous succession, a series of objects each of which boasted of intimate connection with Poe's life.

There were souvenirs of his youth and his schooling abroad—a book he had used during his sojourn at West Point—mementoes of his days as a theatrical critic in the form of playbills, a pen used during his editorial period, a fan once owned by his girl-wife, Virginia, a brooch of Mrs. Clemm's; a profusion of objects including such diverse articles as a cravat-stock and—curiously enough—Poe's battered and tarnished flute.

Again we drank, and I own the wine was potent. Canning's countenance remained cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eye—an evident restrained hysteria in his whole demeanor. At length, from the scattered heap of curiosa, I happened to draw forth and examine a little box of no remarkable character, whereupon I was constrained to inquire its history and what part it had played in the life of Poe.

"In the *life* of Poe?" A visible tremor convulsed the features of my host, then rapidly passed in transformation to a grimace, a rictus of amusement. "This little box—and you will note how, by some fateful design or contrived coincidence it bears a resemblance to the box he himself conceived of and described in his tale, *Berenice*—this little box is concerned with his death, rather than his life. It is, in fact, the self-same box my grandfather Christopher Canning clutched to his bosom when they found him down there."

Again the tremor, again the grimace. "But stay, I have not yet told you of the details. Perhaps you would be interested in seeing the spot where Christopher Canning was stricken; I have already told you of his madness, but I did no more than hint at the character of his delusions. You have been patient with me, and more than patient. Your understanding shall be rewarded, for I perceive you can be fully entrusted with the facts."

What further revelations Canning was prepared to make I could not say, but his manner was such as to inspire a vague disquiet and trepidation in my breast.

Upon perceiving my unease he laughed shortly and laid a hand upon my shoulder. "Come, this should interest you as an *aficionado* of fantasy," he said. "But first, another drink to speed our journey."

He poured, we drank, and then he led the way from that vaulted chamber, down the silent halls, down the staircase, and into the lowest recesses of the building until we reached what resembled a donjon-keep, its floor and the interior of a long archway carefully sheathed in copper. We paused before a door of massive iron. Again I felt in the aspect of

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this scene an element evocative of recognition or recollection.

Canning's intoxication was such that he misinterpreted, or chose to misinterpret, my reaction.

"You need not be afraid," he assured me. "Nothing has happened down here since that day, almost seventy years ago, when his servants discovered him stretched out before this door, the little box clutched to his bosom; collapsed, and in a state of delirium from which he never emerged. For six months he lingered, a hopeless maniac—raving as wildly from the very moment of his discovery as at the moment he died—babbling his visions of the giant horse, the fissured house collapsing into the tarn, the black cat, the pit, the pendulum, the raven on the pallid bust, the beating heart, the pearly teeth, and the nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putridity from which a voice emanated.

"Nor was that all he babbled," Canning confided, and here his voice sank to a whisper that reverberated through the copper-sheathed hall and against the iron door. "He hinted other things far worse than fantasy; of a ghastly reality surpassing all of the phantasms of Poe.

"For the first time my father and the servants learned the purpose of the room he had built beyond this iron door, and learned too what Christopher Canning had done to establish his title as the world's foremost collector of Poe.

"For he babbled again of Poe's death, thirty years earlier, in eighteen forty-nine—of the burial in the Presbyterian Cemetery—and of the removal of the coffin in eighteen seventy-four to the corner where the monument was raised. As I told you, and as was known then, my grandfather had played a public part in instigating that removal. But now we learned of the private part—learned that there was a monument and a grave, but no coffin in the earth beneath Poe's alleged resting place. The coffin now rested in the secret room at the end of this passage. That is why the room, the house itself, had been built.

"I tell you, he had stolen the body of Edgar Allan Poe—and as he shrieked aloud in his final madness, did not this indeed make him the greatest collector of Poe?

"His ultimate intent was never divined, but my father made one significant discovery—the little box clutched to Christopher Canning's bosom contained a portion of the crumbled bones, the veritable dust that was all that remained of Poe's corpse."

My host shuddered and turned away. He led me back along that hall of horror, up the stairs, into the study. Silently, he filled our beakers and I drank as hastily, as deeply, as desperately as he.

"What could my father do? To own the truth was to create a public scandal. He chose instead to keep silence; to devote his own life to study in retirement.

"Naturally the shock affected him profoundly; to my knowledge he never entered the room beyond the iron door and, indeed, I did not know of the room or its contents until the hour of his death—and it was not until some years later that I myself found the key among his effects.

"But find the key I did, and the story was immediately and completely corroborated. Today I am the greatest collector of Poe—for he lies in the keep below, my eternal trophy!"

This time I poured the wine. As I did so, I noted for the first time the imminence of a storm; the impetuous fury of its gusts shaking the casements, and the echoes of its thunder rolling and rumbling down the time-corroded corridors of the old house.

The wild, overstrained vivacity with which my host hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to these sounds did nothing to reassure me—for his recent revelation led me to suspect his sanity.

That the body of Edgar Allan Poe had been stolen—that this mansion had been built to house it—that it was indeed enshrined in a crypt below—that grandsire, son, and grandson had dwelt here alone, apart, enslaved to a sepulchral secret—was beyond sane belief.

And yet, surrounded now by the night and the storm, in a setting torn from Poe's own frenzied fancies, I could not be sure. Here the past was still alive, the very spirit of Poe's tales breathed forth its corruption upon the scene.

As thunder boomed, Launcelot Canning took up Poe's flute, and, whether in defiance of the storm without or as a mocking accompaniment, he played; blowing upon it with drunken persistence, with eery atonality, with nerve-shattering shrillness. To the shrieking of that infernal instrument the thunder added a braying counterpoint.

UNEASY, uncertain and unnerved, I retreated into the shadows of the bookshelves at the farther end of the room, and idly scanned the titles of a row of ancient tomes. Here was the *Chiromancy* of Robert Flud, the *Directorium Inquisitorum,* a rare and curious book in quarto Gothic that was the manual of a forgotten church; and betwixt and between the volumes of pseudo-scientific inquiry, theological speculation, and sundry incunabula I found titles that arrested and appalled me. *De Vermis Mysteriis* and the

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Liber Eibon, treatises on demonology, on witchcraft, on sorcery mouldered in crumbling binding. The books were old, but the books were not dusty. They had been read—

"Read them?" It was as though Canning divined my inmost thoughts. He had put aside his flute and now approached me, tittering as though in continued drunken defiance of the storm. Odd echoes and boomings now sounded through the long halls of the house, and curious grating sounds threatened to drown out his words and his laughter.

"Read them?" said Canning. "I study them. Yes, I have gone beyond grandfather and father, too. It was I who procured the books that held the key, and it was I who found the key. A key more difficult to discover, and more important, than the key to the vaults below. I often wonder if Poe himself had access to these selfsame tomes, knew the selfsame secrets. The secrets of the grave and what lies beyond, and what can be summoned forth if one but holds the key."

He stumbled away and returned with wine. "Drink," he said. "Drink to the night and the storm."

I brushed the proferred glass aside. "Enough," I said. "I must be on my way."

Was it fancy or did I find fear frozen on his features? Canning clutched my arm and cried, "No, stay with me! This is no night on which to be alone; I swear I cannot abide the thought of being alone, I can bear to be alone no more!"

His incoherent babble mingled with the thunder and the echoes; I drew back and confronted him. "Control yourself," I counseled. "Confess that this is a hoax, an elaborate imposture arranged to please your fancy."

"Hoax? Imposture? Stay, and I shall prove to you beyond all doubt"—and so saying, Launcelot Canning stooped and opened a small drawer set in the wall beneath and beside the bookshelves. "This should repay you for your interest in my story, and in Poe," he murmured. "Know that you are the first, other person than myself, to glimpse these treasures."

He handed me a sheaf of manuscripts on plain white paper; documents written in ink curiously similar to that I had noted while perusing Poe's letters. Pages were clipped together in groups, and for a moment I scanned titles alone.

"*The Worm of Midnight, by Edgar Poe*", I read, aloud. "*The Crypt*," I breathed. And here, "*The Further Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym*"—and in my agitation I came close to dropping the precious pages. "Are these what they appear to be—the unpublished tales of Poe?"

My host bowed.

"Unpublished, undiscovered, unknown, save to me—and to you."

covered, unknown, save to me—and to you."

"But this cannot be," I protested. "Surely there would have been a mention of them somewhere, in Poe's own letters or those of his contemporaries. There would have been a clue, an indication, somewhere, some place, somehow."

Thunder mingled with my words, and thunder echoed in Canning's shouted reply.

"You dare to presume an imposture? Then compare!" He stooped again and brought out a glassined folio of letters. "Here—is this not the veritable script of Edgar Poe? Look at the calligraphy of the letter, then at the manuscripts. Can you say they are not penned by the selfsame hand?"

I looked at the handwriting, wondered at the possibilities of a monomaniac's forgery. Could Launcelot Canning, a victim of mental disorder, thus painstakingly simulate Poe's hand?

"Read, then!" Canning screamed through the thunder. "Read, and dare to say that these tales were written by any other than Edgar Poe, whose genius defies the corruption of Time and the Conqueror Worm!"

I read but a line or two, holding the topmost manuscript close to eyes that strained beneath wavering candlelight; but even in the flickering illumination I noted that which told me the only, the incontestable truth. For the paper, the curiously *unyellowed* paper, bore a visible watermark; the name of a firm of well-known modern stationers, and the date—1949.

Putting the sheaf aside, I endeavored to compose myself as I moved away from Launcelot Canning. For now I knew the truth; knew that, one hundred years after Poe's death a semblance of his spirit still lived in the distorted and disordered soul of Canning. Incarnation, reincarnation, call it what you will; Canning was, in his own irrational mind, Edgar Allan Poe.

Stifled and dull echoes of thunder from a remote portion of the mansion now commingled with the soundless seething of my own inner turmoil, as I turned and rashly addressed my host.

"Confess!" I cried. "Is it not true that you have written these tales, fancying yourself the embodiment of Poe? Is it not true that you suffer from a singular delusion born of solitude and everlasting brooding upon the past; that you have reached a stage characterized by the conviction that Poe still lives on in your own person?"

A strong shudder came over him and a sick-

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ly smile quivered about his lips as he replied. "Fool! I say to you that I have spoken the truth. Can you doubt the evidence of your senses? This house is real, the Poe collection exists, and the stories exist—they exist, I swear, as truly as the body lying in the crypt below!"

I took up the little box from the table and removed the lid. "Not so," I answered. "You said your grandfather was found with this box clutched to his breast, before the door of the vault, and that it contained Poe's dust. Yet you cannot escape the fact that the box is empty." I faced him furiously. "Admit it, the story is a fabrication, a romance. Poe's body does not lie beneath this house, nor are these his unpublished works, written during his lifetime and concealed."

"True enough." Canning's smile was ghastly beyond belief. "The dust is gone because I took it and used it—because in the works of wizardry I found the formulae, the arcana whereby I could raise the flesh, recreate the body from the essential salts of the grave. Poe does not *lie* beneath this house—he *lives!* And the tales are *his posthumous works!*"

Accented by thunder, his words crashed against my consciousness.

"That was the end-all and the be-all of my planning, of my studies, of my work, of my life! To raise, by sorcery, the veritable spirit of Edgar Poe from the grave—reclothed and animate in flesh—set him to dwell and dream and do his work again in the private chambers I built in the vaults below—and this I have done! To steal a corpse is but a ghoulish prank; mine is the achievement of true genius!"

The distinct, hollow, metallic, and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation accompanying his words caused him to turn in his seat and face the door of the study, so that I could not see the workings of his countenance—nor could he read my own reaction to his ravings.

His words came but faintly to my ears through the thunder that now shook the house in a relentless grip; the wind rattling the casements and flickering the candle-flame from the great silver candlebra sent a soaring sighing in an anguished accompaniment to his speech.

"I would show him to you, but I dare not; for he hates me as he hates life. I have locked him in the vault, alone, for the resurrected have no need of food nor drink. And he sits there, pen moving over paper, endlessly moving, endlessly pouring out the evil essence of all he guessed and hinted at in life and which he learned in death.

"Do you not see the tragic pity of my plight? I sought to raise his spirit from the dead, to give the world anew of his genius—and yet these tales, these works, are filled and fraught with a terror not to be endured. They cannot be shown to the world, he cannot be shown to the world; in bringing back the dead I have brought back the fruits of death!"

* * *

Echoes sounded anew as I moved toward the door—moved, I confess, to flee this accursed house and its accursed owner.

Canning clutched my hand, my arm, my shoulder. "You cannot go!" he shouted above the storm. "I spoke of his escaping, but did you not guess? Did you not hear it through the thunder—the grating of the door?"

I pushed him aside and he blundered backward upsetting the candlebra, so that flames licked now across the carpeting.

"Wait!" he cried. "Have you not heard his footstep on the stair? *Madman, I tell you that he now stands without the door!*"

A rush of wind, a roar of flame, a shroud of smoke rose all about us. Throwing open the huge, antique panels to which Canning pointed, I staggered into the hall.

I speak of wind, of flame, of smoke—enough to obscure all vision. I speak of Canning's screams, and of thunder loud enough to drown all sound. I speak of terror born of loathing and of desperation enough to shatter all my sanity.

Despite these things, I can never erase from my consciousness that which I beheld as I fled past the doorway and down the hall.

There without the doors there *did* stand a lofty and enshrouded figure; a figure all too familiar, with pallid features, high, domed forehead, mustache set above a mouth. My glimpse lasted but an instant, an instant during which the man—the corpse—the apparition—the hallucination, call it what you will—moved forward into the chamber and clasped Canning to his breast in an unbreakable embrace. Together, the two figures tottered toward the flames, which now rose to blot out vision forevermore.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath, and now fire came to claim the house of Canning for its own.

Suddenly there shot along the path before me a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued—but it was only the flames, rising in supernatural splendor to consume the mansion, and the secrets of the man who collected Poe.

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(Continued from page 12)

For F.F.M., I would like some of the remaining Hodgson stories. "Luck of The Strong," and "Men of The Deep Waters" would be excellent choices. You might try "The Night Land," if you don't mind starting a violent controversy in Readers' Viewpoint. Too violent, perhaps, for F.F.M. I'll make no other suggestions; I am well satisfied with your magazine.

BRADFORD M. DAY.

1411 De Kalb Ave.,
Brooklyn 21, N. Y.

P. S. We hope to bring out this mag checklist in September, but we sure need some help.

CAN YOU HELP HIM?

Some of my friends have from time to time mentioned that somewhere or other they had heard or read that A. Merritt had written a story (I think a short story) which was titled "In Old Trinity Churchyard," or something very similar. It was definitely "Old Trinity Churchyard" incorporated in the title.

Could you perhaps tell me if A. Merritt actually did ever write such a story? If possible, where it could be found? These people are very positive about its having been written by him.

Any helpful information will be most highly appreciated.

"Brood of The Witch Queen"—January F.F.M. was the most beautiful issue ever put out—I think.

M. J. MILLER.

1348 Lakeland Ave.,
Lakewood 7, Ohio.

CHAMBERS' STORY A SUCCESS

Congrats to F.F.M. on your success in printing "Slayer of Souls"—it was magnifique. I am a new reader of your magazine, although I am an H. Rider Haggard fan plumb to the bone. I have fifty-five volumes of Haggard's and lack only a few to complete my collection. Do any of your readers have any of his volumes for sale, such as "Ghost Kings," "Wizard," "Lady of Blossholme," "The Ivory Child," "The Yellow God," "The Virgin of the Sun," "Belshazzer," or others?

I am subscribing for your magazine at once and think it is wonderful. How about printing A. Conan Doyle's "The Land of Mists"?

JIM EDWARDS.

1700 South West 15 St.,
Oklahoma City, Okla.

LIKED "SLAYER OF SOULS"

The "new look" in F.F.M. caused me to miss the January issue and "Brood of the Witch Queen." Not knowing of the new small size, it was not until the March issue came out that I spotted F.F.M. piled among the smaller magazines.

Of the March issue I can only say, the short stories were excellent. As for "Threshold of Fear," your usual standard of quality is so high, you can be pardoned for a dud like this one now and then. But not too often, please! It had a terrific build-up to a big let-down; the cover denoted a story of ancient Incan tribes (which wasn't true), the mystery was solved in a sloppy fashion by dragging in a character who didn't even appear in the earlier part of the story, and the whole thing wasn't really fantasy.

With the May issue, I must say that I am pleased with the new format. The improvement in the covers, the trimmed pages, the smaller size, definitely add class, and place F.F.M. a few notches above most of the BEM's on the newsstand.

As for the stories, "Lukundoo" was one of the most horrible, gruesome stories I have ever read. The whole subject is objectionable, and in bad taste. Please, dear Editor, no more "Lukundoo"!

"The Slayer of Souls" more than counterbalanced its companion piece. There is a touch of Merritt about this story. It is hard to believe this story was written in 1920, it is so applicable to world conditions today.

I have seen several requests for the return of the old *Astonishing*. I have never seen a copy of this magazine, but would like to see a fantasy magazine on the market that would encourage present day writers to create real fantasy along the lines of Merritt, Chambers, and their like. There is so little market for genuine fantasy in the space operas that flood the newsstands today.

May you continue to bring the best in fantasy to your readers in the future.

FLOYD N. HILLIKER.

4115 Orleans Ave., SW,
Grand Rapids 8,
Mich.

MAY COVER BEST

I wish to thank you for printing my letter in the January issue of F.F.M. Since then I have received many letters but one has been outstanding. Raul Garcia Capella, Jr., has been writing to me weekly since the ish with my letter hit the stands; in him I find a swell friend and owe all thanks due to you for helping me find him and another pen friend; Jan Romanoff. I could write quite a list but no time if I want to get this finished. Since my letter appeared in January, I have written to 250 young people (what's age 16 or 66) and have received all the information I asked for.

I was very much surprised at the new format and almost missed the edition as I was looking through the pulps. Until the May ish I had only one complaint—no inside illos! It was wonderful to see Finlay back in the last ish and I for one would like to see more of him on the covers—how about it?

I think that the best cover so far has been the May cover for "The Slayer of Souls" and the poorest for the March cover, which had nothing to do with the story.

As to "Threshold of Fear" all I can say is "disappointing," reminiscent of typical modern day psychiatric problems and merely proving the power of suggestion. Blasphemy—but I don't care for Lovecraft and would suggest Wells and/or Rohmer in his place.

I would like to see "Wisdom's Daughter" by H.R.H. reprinted because it is Haggard's greatest. If this were put between the covers of F.F.M., it would be a collector's item in more ways than one. I have read this book but would like to have

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it in mag form and I firmly believe (I'm not naive) that only F.F.M. would do this story justice.

In closing I wish again to extend my thanks for printing my letter(s). As before I still say that F.F.M. is "really readable" (that can be interpreted in more ways than one in case any of you fans smile).

Always a reader,
ROY WHEATON.

430 E. Third St.,
So. Boston 27, Mass.

LIKED REES STORY

For quite a few years I've been an ardent reader of fantastic stories of all kinds. I don't know how it is that I've passed up your book *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* until this past week. I ran across it during my lunch hour and must say I've never been more pleased by a mag of this type. I've never heard of Arthur J. Rees before, but his story is the *best* I've read in a long time. For once here is a book which has the stories according to name of book—*Mystery*. Most books have everything but.

You can be sure I am a fan as of now to this wonderful new discovery of mine. Now as I am rather lonely here in N. Y. (a stranger)—I'd very much appreciate it if you would publish this letter.

The more mail I get, the happier I am, so please write. I'll answer any and all mail. Any out of States, please state postage rate. Am eagerly looking forward to the next issue which my dealer says will be in tomorrow. Keep up the good work. Your book is well worth the price and has more entertainment than most of them.

Fantastically yours,
MRS. ALLAN KOLB.

897 Bryant Ave.,
New York 59, N. Y.

PREFERRED F.F.M.'S OLD COVERS

F.F.M. is first-class; its new format is slick, but please revert to your classic covers. The last two are ordinary, not up to standard, and Finlay, Lawrence and Saunders were marvelous. Go back to covers like "The Scarlet Plague," "Moon Pool" and other classics, with beautiful girls such as your artists formerly painted. More inside illustrations, please. Two are not enough. I get the mag for illustrations de luxe. Finlay, Lawrence, Bok, Leydenfrost and Callé are all first class.

The stories are all good, and keep the super shorts you have been giving us regularly.

Thanks for "Slayer of Souls," long wanted. How about "I Found Atlantis" by Wheatley and "Golden Blood" by Williamson?

S. THACKER.

35 Elsenham Rd.,
Grimsby, Linc's
England

CHAMBERS' CLASSIC DELIGHTS

The new magazine is lovely. Delighted to see Chambers' classic "Slayer of Souls." How about some humorous fantasy such as "Professor On Paws" (Cox) etc., etc. I have some paperbound Avon Merritt's here for sale. Also two first edition Rider Haggard's.

L. B. DAVIS.

4324 West 59 Pl.,
Los Angeles 43, Calif.

SWAP-OR-TRADE OFFER

Please register my protest against your new policy of so few illustrations. If anyone is interested in back issues of your mag, I have many to trade or sell at reasonable rates. Have many of Haggard, Shiel, S. Fowler Wright, Stapledon and others in book form. Just give us a few illustrations and we won't have a thing to complain about. "Slayer of Souls" was a very good choice.

JOHN E. KOESTNER.

2124 Rene Ct.,
Brooklyn 27, N. Y.

TRIBUTE TO FILM PRODUCER

First off I'd like to say how sorry I was to hear of the recent death of Val Lewton, the brilliant producer of some of the finest fantasy films ever made. I'm speaking, of course, about "The Body Snatcher," "Isle of the Dead," "I Walked With A Zombie," "Cat People," "Curse of the Cat People," "Bedlam." I believe he's the one man who could have made such stories as Blackwood's "The Wendigo" and "The Willows," Jacobs' "The Monkey's Paw" and some of Poe's and Lovecraft's stories come to life on the screen.

As for the March issue, "Threshold of Fear" was an exciting, spooky tale, but it wasn't fantasy. I'm glad to hear you're putting the pictures back in.

ROY HALE.

St. Paul, Minn.

CAN YOU HELP HER?

Have you any story listings by Rohmer, Haggard or Wells?

Could you give me any idea of what happened to a magazine called *Horror Stories*? The stories were superb but I only ran across one copy and all efforts to find out more about it have proved futile.

I just read my first copy of F.F.M., but believe me I'll not miss another. I would like to know some of the stories in the back issues so I could choose. Would it be possible to find out?

JOYCE BOLTON.

Mason Road,
Milford, N. H.

Editor's Note: Horror Stories was discontinued some years ago. Perhaps some of the readers will suggest stories in back issues they have. We do not keep any of these.

NEW READER

I am a girl, fourteen years old, and although I have read only two issues of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* I'll be a reader for life from now on.

"Brood of the Witch Queen"—wonderfull!! I think it's one of the very best fantasy stories. The

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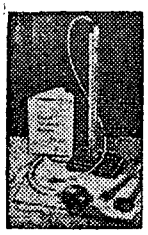
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FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES

March issue's story "The Threshold of Fear" was only fairly good, I thought. It took too long from the beginning to the part where Edward Chesworth tells of his terrifying adventures. The three short stories were good, however, especially "The Music of Erich Zann."

Please print "Ayesha" or "The Return of She," both by H. Rider Haggard!

DEBRALEE LESTER.

Editor's Note: I have lost your address somehow. If you wish to send it in, I'll publish it.

OUR COVERS IMPROVING

Ever since I had read "Slayer of Souls" in book form I had been hoping F.F.M. would reprint it. Thanks. I would like to see more by Chambers. He is in that distinct class which few other fantasy authors have reached.

Your covers keep improving steadily. Before I forget, just who did the May cover? You don't print the cover artist's name as you used to. I'm looking forward to a cover by Savage.

Thanks for bringing back the illos. It just wouldn't be F.F.M. without them. There weren't enough illos this issue. Only two.

Now I'd like to get in a commercial: I have almost every issue of F.N., a few F.F.M.s to swap.

JAN ROMANOFF.

26601 So. Western,
Apt. 341,
Lomita, Calif.

Editor's Note: Lawrence did the May cover.

BACK ISSUES OFFERED

I am disposing of my collection of fantasy magazines.

Prices for the mags are as follows: before 1948, 50c each, after that year, 25c each. I could also be persuaded to swap for cloth-bound weird and fantastic books, my preference in authors being Algernon Blackwood, Robert Chambers, Arthur Machen, Oliver Onions, and Bram Stoker. Send stamped, self-addressed envelope for the list.

GENE TIPTON.

Hannah's Inc.,
Johnson City,
Tenn.

EXCELLENT WORK!

Excellent work! Your choices are all that I could desire. One suggestion, though; why not get "The Beetle" by Richard Marsh?

May I please use this letter as an advertisement? I have the following books available, in excellent condition and at very reasonable prices: The three "Skylark" books; the first three "Lensman" books; "The Flying Saucers Are Real;" Merritt's "Metal Monster;" Williamson's "Legion of Space"; Lovecraft's "Best Supernatural Stories"; "And The Darkness Falls" edited by Boris Karloff; "Threshold of Fear" (FFM edition); and "The Torch" (FN edition).

PETER E. NICOLLS.

326 West 10th St.,
Pueblo, Col.

(Continued on page 110)

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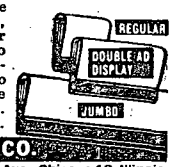

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(Continued from page 108)

HIGH PRAISE FOR F.F.M.

I have just finished "The Slayer of Souls," by Chambers; as I put it down, I arose from my easy chair in this wee hour before the dawn with the intention of writing a missive that could no longer be withheld.

When the standards were so magnificently raised in the January format, "Brood of the Witch Queen," it was quite evident that they were too good to continue—but, they *have* continued, and I wish to congratulate you.

Upon finishing the last three novels of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, I find that I am left with a strange nostalgia, a weird desire for a lost love that I never knew, in some far off, oriental empire whose marble splendours tumbled a long, long time ago. I never felt this way about any of your previous publications; please keep it up.

I see that, next month, you are going to publish "The War of the Worlds", by H. G. Wells; I bow profusely.

There is a certain, hardly definable type of literature that is not fantasy or practical adventure; it seems to be a combination of the earthly dreams of men and the strange possibilities that these dreams contain—it is a literature that does not have to look into the far depths of outer space to attain awe-inspiring mystery, for, instead, by searching out the faded glories of forgotten cultures, and dead peoples, it repopulates the earth once more with the long dead hopes, fears, loves, lusts, all of another humanity, of a never to be forgotten age, and thus, changing in our minds the very world in which we . . . exist . . . it sweeps us back, or forward, to whatever dead or promised magnificence that the author intends us to behold.

The last three novels of F.F.M. have tended toward this type; in all basic respects, this is better than fantasy, for it is educational; moreover, it is just as "escapistic" as fantasy, in the sense that it lifts us from the cold, thankless drudgery of today into the happy, romantic aeons of yesteryear, or tomorrow.

I have seen magazines which boast to hold the title, "The Aristocrat of Science Fiction." What lay inside? Sex appeal, combined with a fine lot of some of the worst, the most poorly written stories that it has ever been my misfortune to read. F.F.M. makes no boasts, yet, in my eye, and in the eyes of intelligent fans, they stand out as magazines worth the money to have bound into books that will last the years.

I would enjoy corresponding with anyone who is interested in mysticism, magic, strange cults and sciences, unusual tortures, and the like; I would like especially to hear from people in places like Egypt, Tibet, South America and China. Out of the way lands.

Sincerely,

Louis M. Hobbs.

Hyde Avenue Extension,
Ridgway, Penn.

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MONSIEUR SEEKS A WIFE

(Continued from page 89)

rushed upon that obscene herd, striking right and left to hew a passage through them. They fled shrieking in front of me but closed on me from behind; I was bitten, clawed, scratched, hacked at, cut at, with no proper weapons it seemed, but the blows would have been sufficient to overcome me had not all my forces been so desperately engaged.

After a period that seemed to endure for hours, I found that I was hacking blindly at the empty air; I wiped the blood from my eyes and looking round me saw that I was alone, surrounded only by the mounds and hillocks through which I had approached to that frightful merrymaking. My legs could no longer support me, my senses fled from me, and I fell upon the ground.

I woke to consciousness to see the light of dawn behind the mountains. All was silent; at some distance, a thin column of smoke, as from a dying fire, ascended straight upwards in the still air. I struggled to my feet and with all the strength that was left in my bruised body I dragged myself towards the château.

One of my grooms was in the courtyard as I entered, and cried out on seeing my condition. I cut him short and ordered him to assemble the rest of my band and have my horses saddled with the utmost expedition. I commanded Jacques to leave all my baggage and we were ready for departure before any of the Comte's household, excepting the servants, were aroused.

In raw and foggy daylight we rode out of the courtyard and down the road that led from Riennes.

* * *

I will finish this event in my memories here, though I must traverse six years to do so. The other day, while on a protracted visit to London, I was sitting in White's coffee-house when Jacques brought me the papers that I have sent me regularly from France. In one of them was a notice which so much engaged my attention that I lost all account of the conversation around me. My Lord Selborne asked me what news I found so engrossing. I read aloud: "In the French Juras a nun, youngest daughter of the ancient and noble family of R——, has been tried and found guilty of sorcery. She was burnt at the stake. The nun's two sisters are also in the religious life, and the eldest, who is in the same convent, fell under suspicion for some time but has been cleared. In fact so many arrests were made both within the convent and through

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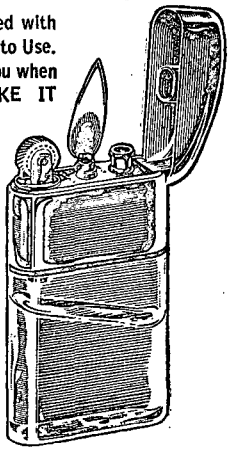

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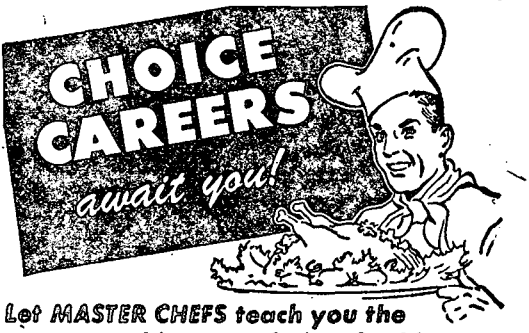

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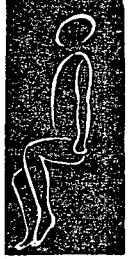

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the whole countryside that it was found impossible to prosecute them all, lest the whole district of R——, the scene of these horrors, should require to be burnt."

Here my lord interrupted me with expressions of horror that France, even in her remotest provinces, should still be so barbarously superstitious as to burn a woman of quality for a witch.

"In England," he remarked, "we got over such whimsies in the time of the Stuarts, and since then the women, God bless 'em, have been allowed to enchant with impunity."

That very able man, Monsieur Voltaire the playwright, who was then on his visit to England, burst forth in great indignation against the priest-ridden laws of our country that could make such executions possible. What could it matter, he declared, if an ignorant peasantry, rebelling against the tedium of its miserable existence, cared at certain seasons to make a bonfire, dress up one of their number as the devil, put masks on the rest, and indulge in the mummery of the Witches' Sabbath?

In his grandfather's day, sorcery had been a fashion extending even to the *noblesse* and gentry; the trial of La Voisin, the famous sorceress and prisoner, had implicated hundreds, even, it was whispered, the King's reigning sweetheart, Madame de Montespan herself. Whole villages, indeed whole districts in the Basques and Juras had been devastated by the laws against witchcraft, and it had proved impossible to deal with all the witches that had been arrested.

"But witchcraft amounted to more than mummery," declared one Mr. Calthrop. "On my own estate in my father's time a stone was thrown at an old woman's dog and the mark was found on *her* body."

Monsieur Voltaire waved this aside. He had heard many such instances and did not deny that there was foundation for them. Such people as believed themselves to be witches were certainly abnormal, and they, and the animals they used as their ministers, might well have abnormal powers. But he was certain that the world did not yet fully realise the powers of thought and belief. He considered it possible that future ages would attribute such instances of unnatural sympathy between a witch and her familiars to an unnatural state of mind and body. He addressed his remarks chiefly to me, but I did not answer them.

In spite of the fact that as I am now approaching my thirty-first year, middle age is hard upon me, I have still to find a wife to carry on my family.

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NOBODY'S HOUSE

(Continued from page 97)

I saw you lying there . . . the blood scarcely showed. I was sitting here waiting for Muriel. I heard you both come up the drive. Muriel was laughing at something. You were both talking to the groom outside. Then I heard you in the hall, and Muriel ordered tea and went upstairs. And I thought, 'She doesn't come in to see me. I'm nothing to her now. I'm crocked. It's all Peter, Peter, Peter. By God!' I said, 'I've been blind as well as lame. The things I've seen which they pretended were nothing. . . . The things I haven't seen, but heard of in whispers and hints.' All in a moment my brain caught fire. 'Damn you!' I said, 'I'll teach you to fool a lame man!' Then . . . you came in."

The trembling woman outside heard him utter a hoarse cry.

"Peter! Peter! Oh, God, I'm beginning to remember! You stood where you're standing now, touching the handle of the door. That's right! And you said—I remember now—'Give us a peg, Jerry. I'm frozen. There's a devil of an east wind.' Peter! Peter! Don't look like that! I'm remembering . . . remembering.

"Oh, God, have mercy . . . . have mercy on me!"

A hoarse scream echoed through the room, a chair reeled over with a crash, and then followed a frenzied shouting.

"I remember . . . I remember . . . damn you, when you turned your back on me . . . like that. . . ."

A shot rang out; then another. Then silence enfolded Nobody's House, and its one living inmate, a fainting woman, who clung to the oak balustrade.

* * *

It was half an hour later when Mrs. Park forced herself into the library. The red glow of the fire was still dancing on the walls and floor.

For a moment one ruddy gleam seemed to take a fantastic shape—like the prostrate figure of a man in hunting pink.

Harboys lay crumpled and face downwards across the hearth, the revolver still in his hand, the ugly wound in his temple mercifully hidden.

To that end had he remembered.

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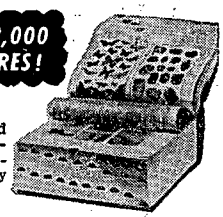

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